

INKY PAWS

a nonhuman publication for original fiction
writings by nonhumans and alterhumans



Issue Three
Winter 2024



Organized by
Who-is-Page
of the Sol System

Inspired by Tsu's
The Forest Voice

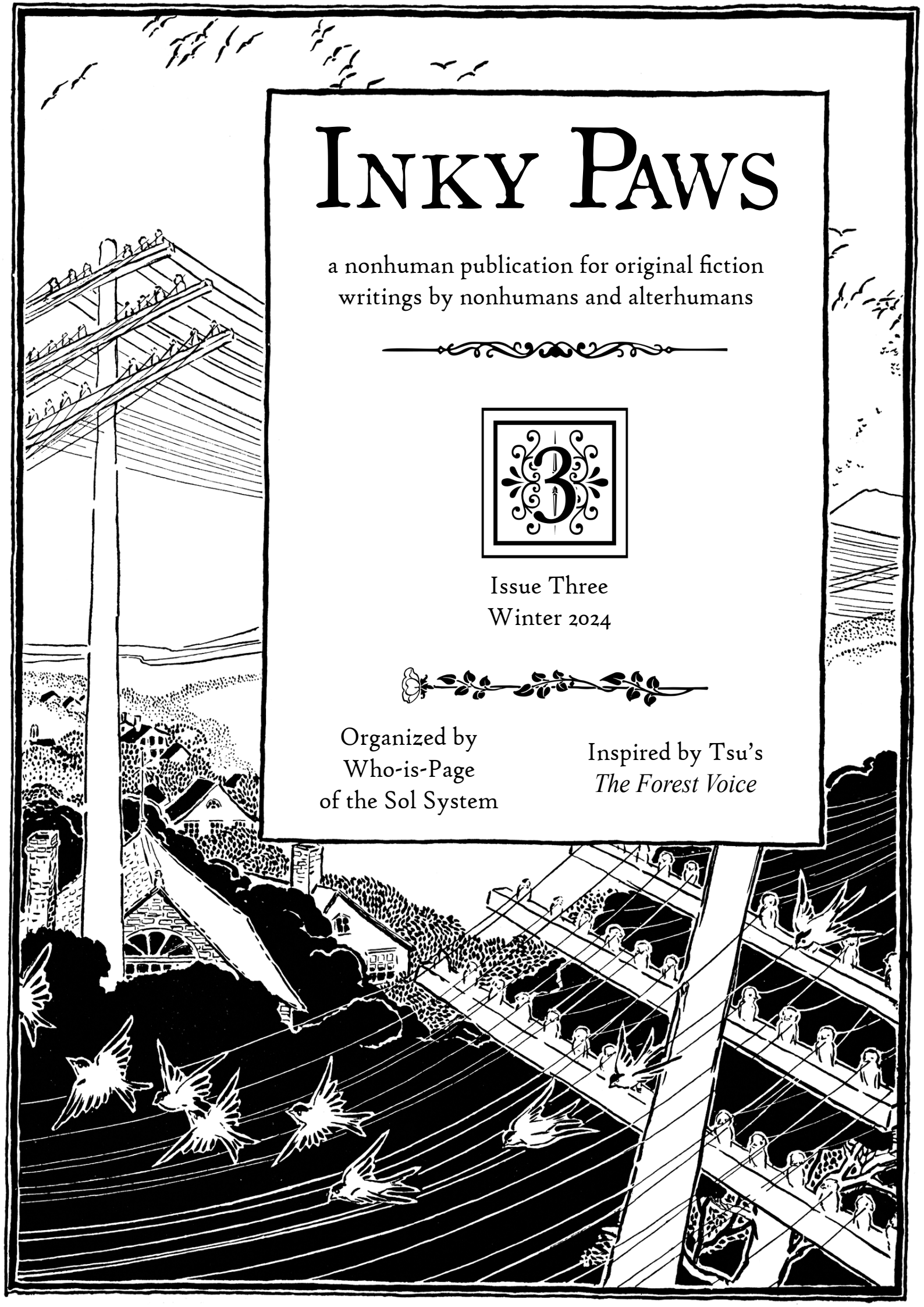


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I'd also like to thank my partners: T.S., House of Chimeras, and Orion Scribner (and the rest of my polycule, too). They believe in me even when I struggle to believe in myself.

Many images utilized in this project, when not from the royalty-free resources gifted by Orion, were from Pixabay and the Florida Center for Instructional Technology (specifically from <https://etc.usf.edu/clipart/>). These collections were invaluable for designing this zine.

This project was inspired by Tsu Swanblood's *The Forest Voice* zine.

The cover for this year is a homage to the cover of the first zine I ever made, *Don't Feed The Birds*.

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Aster

Remember, Holy, and Infinite

https://fallen_and_holy.tumblr.com

Polywere fallen angel, dragon, nixie, and maned wolf.

Corvid

The girl who sits in the woods

<https://corvidthedragon.tumblr.com>

This poem is about how I feel as an Otherkin, specifically as a dragon. I have always felt like my human body was never enough (I know many of you can relate) and this poem was a means of expressing the longing I have for my dragon form, and acting 'inhuman'.

Goratrix *bani* Tremere

Dragonkilyn

<https://draconicwizardworkshop.neocities.org/>



House of Chimeras

I Just Take Myself For Walks

<https://houseofchimeras.neocities.org/>

jams

my ex-lover turned me into a werewolf

<https://onychophorum.neocities.org>

LightfarerDistortion (Distortion Haywire)

Kin Enough

<https://lightfarerdistortion.tumblr.com>

i wrote this poem because I keep wondering: What if i can't help "faking it"? I know i'm kind of fake- but i can't help the fact that i'm kind of real, too.

Maddy of the House

Orbital Resonance

<https://zpires.com>

Nova

Basically Tiramisu Recipe

<https://nova-dergs.weebly.com/>

Plushi Paws

Our Own Sort of Dragon

<https://plushipaws.tumblr.com>

Prince B.

wasp-cat's runaway

My name is Prince, I use any pronouns, and I am a queer and autistic hobbyist writer, artist, and nonhuman - namely, a wasp-cat hybrid. I ran in therian circles when I was younger, but only began fully identifying as nonhuman recently, though I no longer identify with the terms 'therian' or 'otherkin'; 'nonhuman' suits me much better.

This poem was written to express the frustration and complicated feelings I harbor for my family, who have always done their best to be caring and supportive, but who I have always struggled to feel truly understood with, in large part because of my queerness and neurodivergence. I don't hold this against them, but it can often feel lonely and disheartening - a sentiment which I see very strongly reflected in my nonhuman identity. I hope this poem, which I initially wrote to process my own emotions, touches some of my fellow creatures' hearts: may we all one day find the homes and families of our choosing where we can truly exist as ourselves.



Prose

Untitled

Become the wildlife around you

Reese Pender

Greased Fur

<https://resependerwrites.neocities.org/>

Author(s) of Sawyer's Life from last year's submission.
Multiple nonhumans in a suspiciously human-shaped body
pretending to be one person.

Silver of the Dragonheart Collective

The Future is Nonhuman

<https://dragonsroost.neocities.org/>

Stormy

Home is Just Out of Reach

<https://your-bigender-big-brother.tumblr.com>

Swiftpaw ex Anomaly

It's almost moonset, I'm dead. It's It's 9:52am, I need to get to social studies.

<https://anomaly.monster/>

My own experiences as a walk-in fictive who entered this body in middle school.

Sya

Sacred Shadow's Demise

<https://multiverse-sya.tumblr.com>

This piece is heavily influenced by some sort of nightmare or vision I've had while I was trying to fall asleep. It relates to my past life alien identity.

Victor

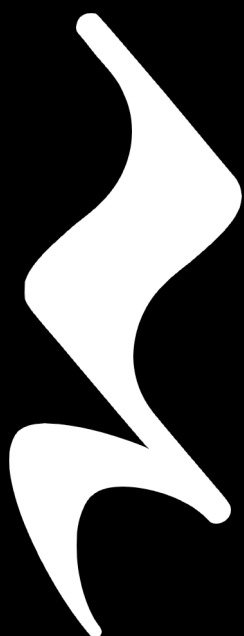
Perception

<https://randomvoices.tumblr.com>

N/A

A Pawprint on the Heart

<https://digital-freegan.itch.io/>





Pawprint on the Heart

all others saw was a quadrupedal girl
but beneath first impressions was an entire world

locked in the cage of the mind
a suffering little pup inside

in a prison of man's creation
enacted via species separation

just wanting to be free
to shit, to vomit, to pee

love binds itself to our very flesh
a possession of our thighs, hands and chest

cauldrons of feelin' are brewin
the thanatosis of bein' human

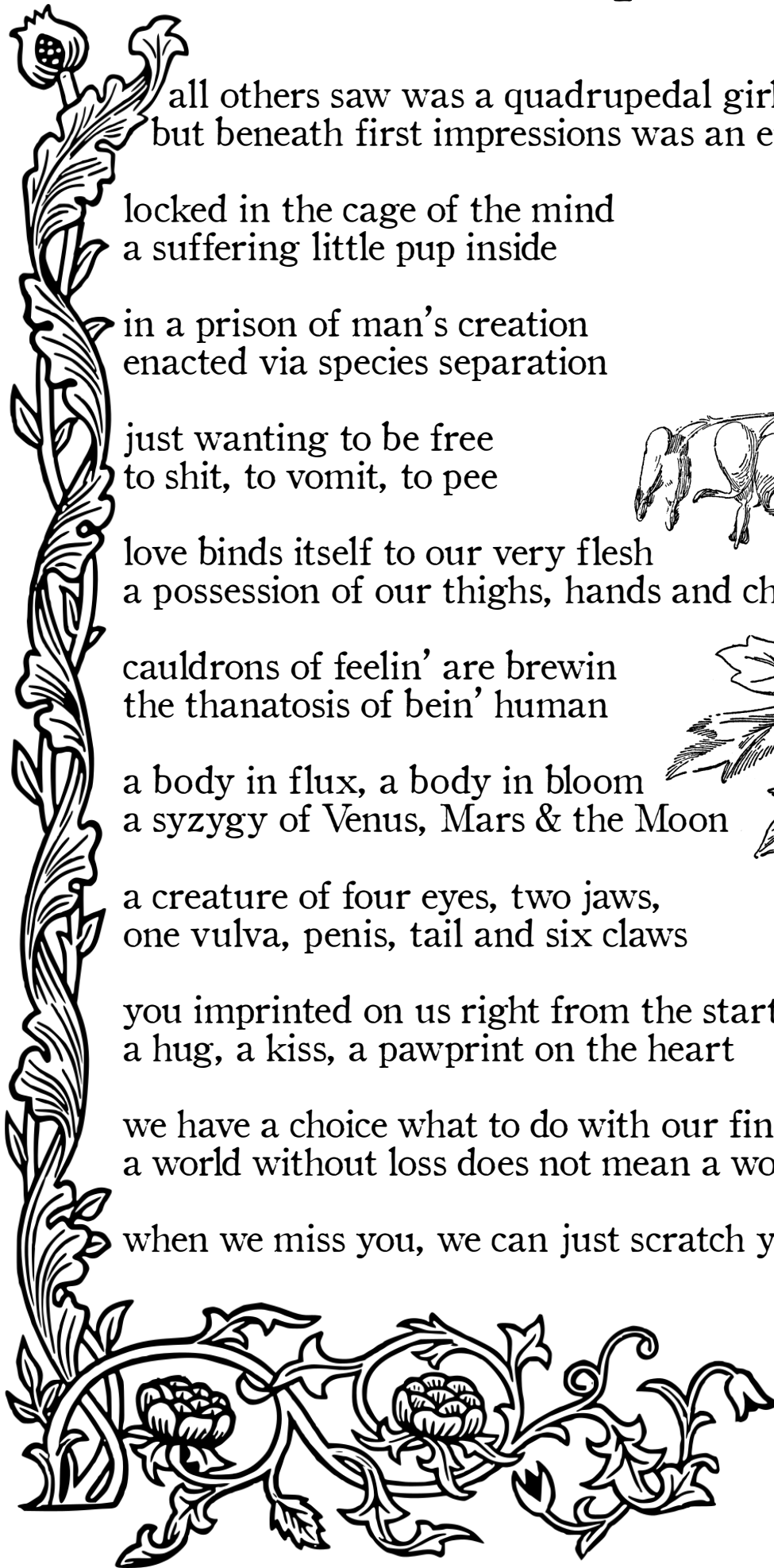
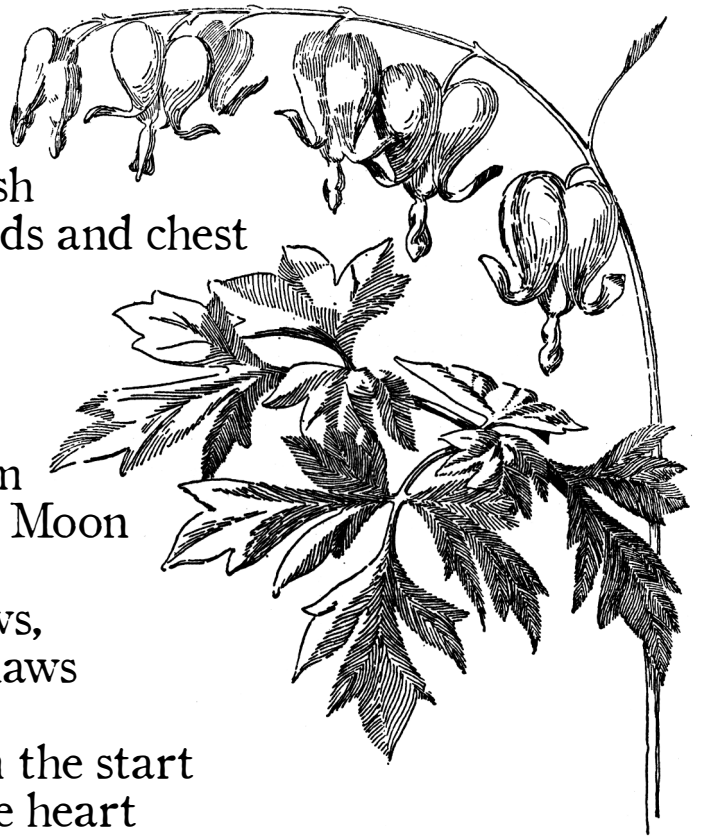
a body in flux, a body in bloom
a syzygy of Venus, Mars & the Moon

a creature of four eyes, two jaws,
one vulva, penis, tail and six claws

you imprinted on us right from the start
a hug, a kiss, a pawprint on the heart

we have a choice what to do with our final breath
a world without loss does not mean a world without death

when we miss you, we can just scratch your neck





Alterhuman

By Anonymous | CW: Heights, falling, flying

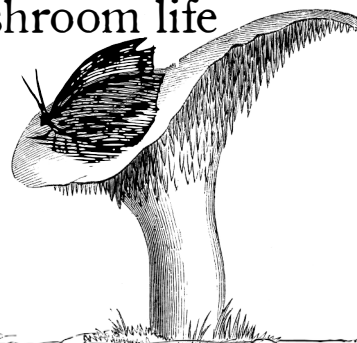
Autumn winds flow through
me, I happily join their dance

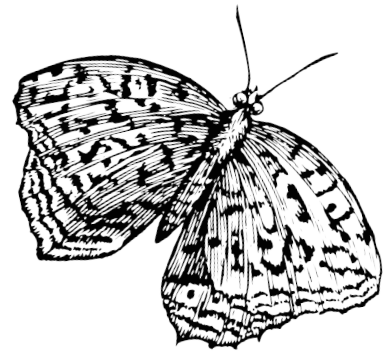
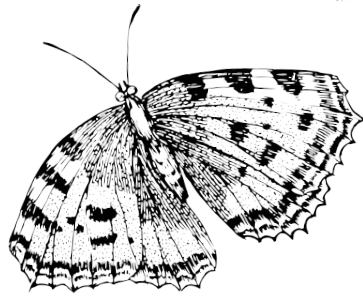
Later that night, I warm up to
the rain's dreary prance

Thunder claps as I fall,
tumbling to the ground

Ending up on a chanterelle
that happened to be around

Realizing that mushroom life
isn't half bad





Humidity makes me stick
around and for that I am glad

Under the foliage, I spot a
spotted bird

Misnomer, I guess, they are
beetles, or so I've heard

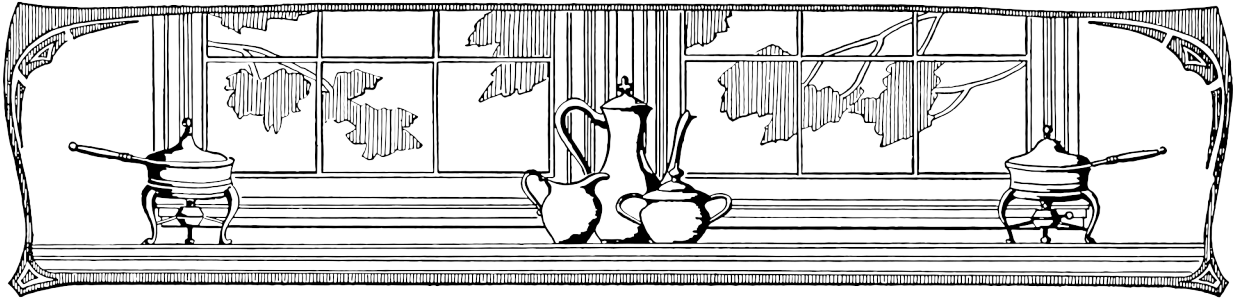
Aiming for the skies, my
spores soar and I fly

Now as a ladybird, I feel the
wind pass me by.



asically Tiramisu

By Nova



★★★★☆ - 2 Reviews

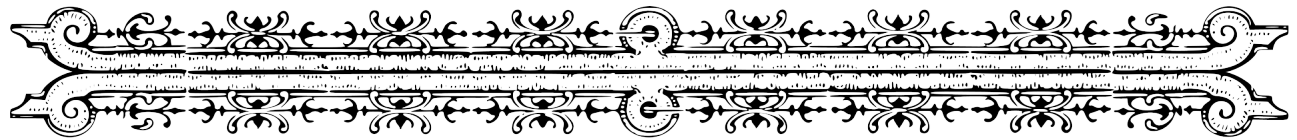
Prep: 15 mins + Overnight Chilling

Makes: 9 servings



This dessert is perfect for anytime you just want a soft, comforting dessert with as little hassle to make yourself as possible.

“It’s so good and so simple you’ll be left wondering how it disappeared so quick!” - Isabell of the Discount Ghidorah System



Ingredients

Half a box of graham crackers

½ cup of coffee

2 tbsp brown sugar

½ cup milk of some manner (we used soy)

1 carton of whipped cream

Cocoa powder (for dusting the top)





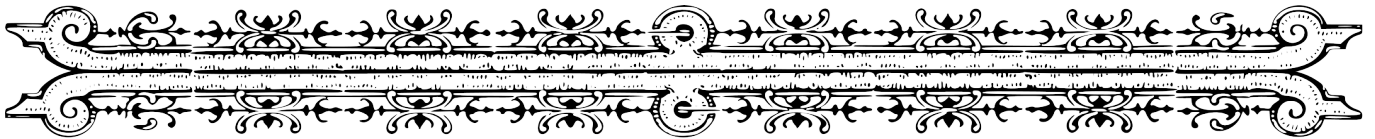
Equipment

8x8 Pan

Another pan big enough to soak a graham cracker

Measuring Cup

Spatula



Wait! This doesn't sound like tiramisu!

Shhhhh. It's fine, don't worry about it, we won't tell if you don't. Trust us, it tastes and looks good anyway, the dessert doesn't care whether it's traditional or not.



Directions

Step 1: Prepare your battle station

No proper spell is cast on the fly. Levitate yourself out two pans, and a measuring cup for later, from the cabinet. One 8x8 pan for the dessert to be assembled in and another for soaking the crackers in the coffee mixture. Set the pans side-by-side so nothing drips on your counters when you're floating soaked crackers from one to the other.

Retrieve your whipped cream and have it handy near the pans too. You want it soft, so we recommend a simple warming spell. Or, if you're like us, you can ask your dragon partner to gently heat it up on their scales - do either for about 20 seconds prior to starting. Spread a thin layer of whipped cream on the bottom of the 8x8 dessert assembly pan.

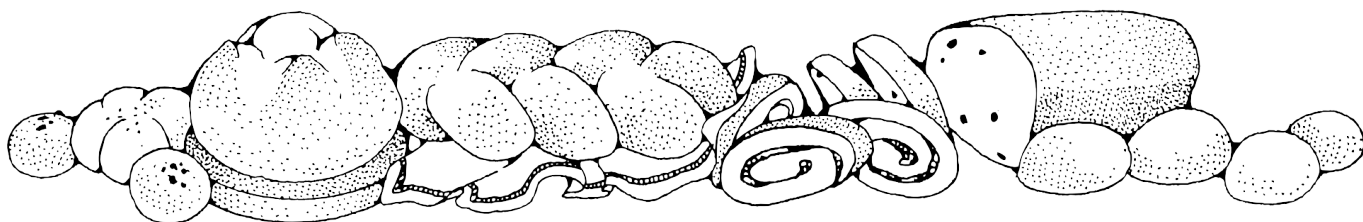


Step 2: Make coffee

However you normally do it, yeah you can use instant. Be careful with instant though - coffee is a stimulant so magic involving it naturally gets a boost in the speed department. You want to be prepared when it starts to flow and not work so fast that the coffee comes out like barely flavored water.

This is also the section where you'd need the measuring cup. If you didn't bring that out of the cabinets in the step above, do it now—or don't. You can eyeball it if you're feeling lucky. However, it might still be best to use some sort of cup though. Levitation spells are prone to breaking if you have too many going at once after all.

Mix together the coffee, milk and sugar and pour it into the empty cracker-soaking pan.



Step 3: Soak your crackers

Dip your crackers into the coffee mixture and be quick about it. After like 20 seconds the crackers will start to break apart. You wanna dip, flip them to soak the other side and move them to your other pan ideally in 10 seconds.

This might also be another great time to get your dragon partner involved in theory. However, in practice, claws are better for breaking crackers than dipping them.

Layer the crackers side-by-side over the whipped cream layer until covered. After that, add another layer of whipped cream and then repeat with soaked crackers until the dessert is as tall as you want. We recommend adding three layers of crackers. If you choose to go above that, you will most likely need to buy more than one package of whipped cream.



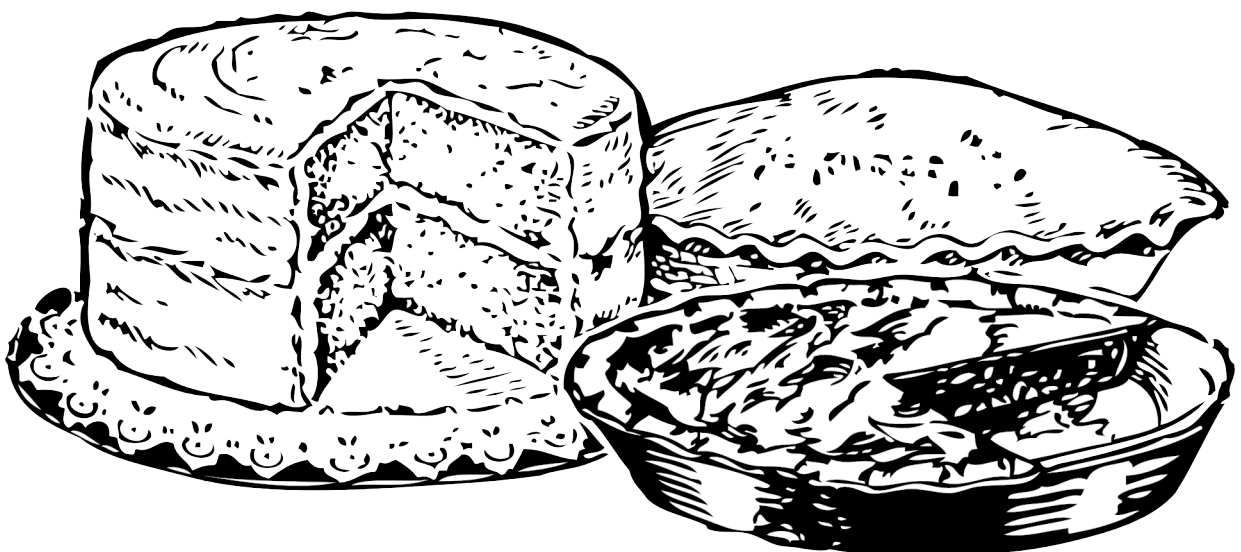
Step 4: Temper your expectations

The crackers are gonna break apart. There'll be gaps that don't fill nicely with either cream or crackers and that's fine. Don't worry about being perfect, we promise it'll taste fantastic at the end either way.

End your layering with one final spread of whipped cream. Dust with cocoa powder to be fancy.

Step 5: Chill overnight (yeah right)

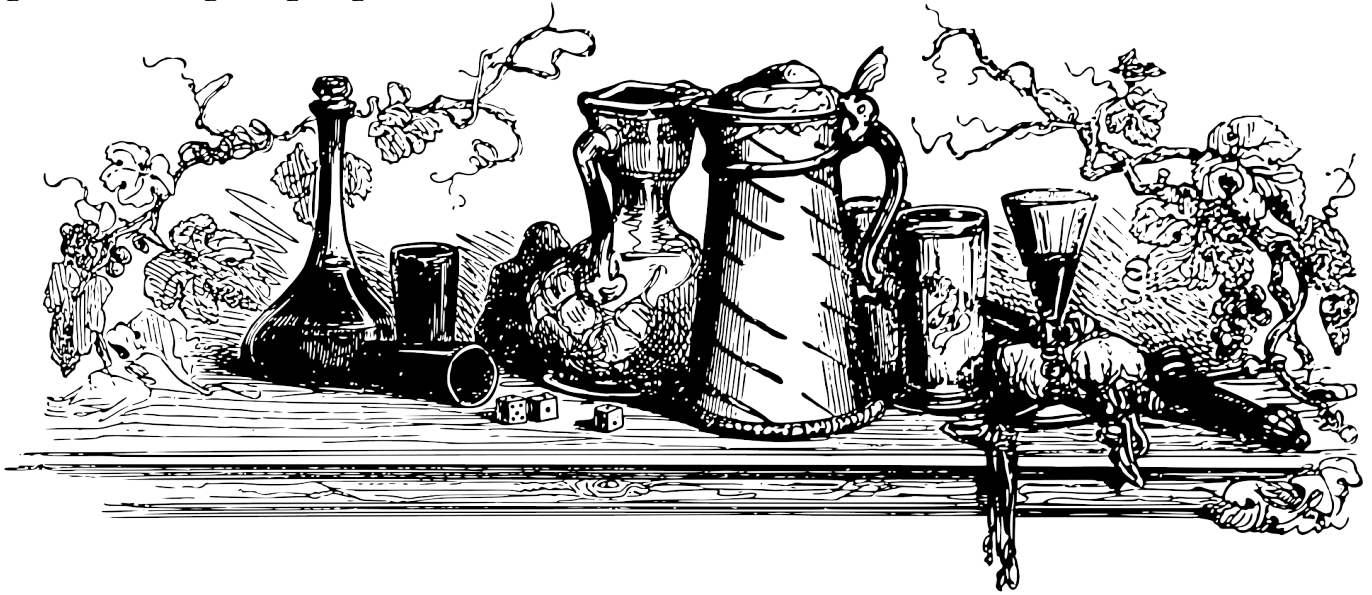
Unfortunately, time travel spells still aren't a thing. Wait at least an hour, longer if you have the will power. The longer this dessert sits the better it will taste. Seriously! It tends to peak around day three.



Basically Tiramisu Tips

Make a second pan: If you make two right away, then by the time you finish devouring the first the second is at peak tastiness from chilling in the fridge for a few days.

You can easily make a no-magic version if you exclude the basic levitation spells and hoof it around the kitchen yourself. Mundane coffee makers are also catching on, you might even be able to find one at your local home goods store. Otherwise, you could purchase pre-prepared coffee.



Reviews

Soaring Aura

★★★★☆☆

The serving size is off. My 8x8 pan only made two, not nine. :/

Grammy Bray

★★★★★★

Great job sweetie! I'll try making this next week.





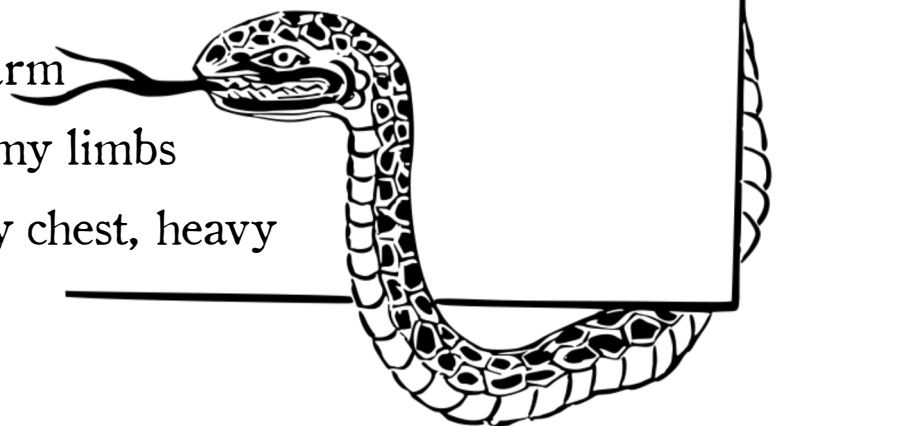
ragonkilyn

By Goratrix *bani* Tremere

Was it my fangs, molded
In your image that scared
You away, or was it their imperfections
That drove you to find me repulsive? Was it the knife
That slipped, metaphorically speaking, the mistake
Or was it that you saw yourself in me, too deep
To ever excise, to remove with anything but scorched
Earth?

You found me burning in flames
And breathed your own to put me out, shouting
At those killing me to stop.
Did you love me at first sight? I didn't
Know anyone could until you
Told me, years later, and I wonder
If that was true or if you lied to seem more perfect.

You wrapped me in your warm
Bright coils, curled around my limbs
And rested your head on my chest, heavy

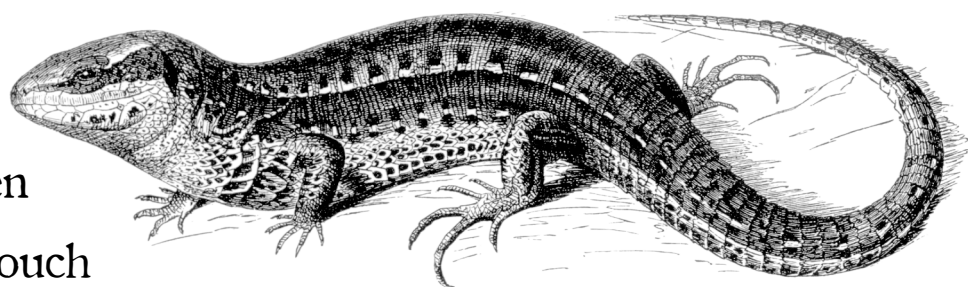




Breaths and scales pressed into my skin. You
left

Marks where you touched (like the red scratches
From your claws each night), impressions
Of scales and spines left in my soft skin.

And yet, I stayed
Scaled and marked even
When you refused to touch



Me again, after my mistake (I am not perfect)
When you told me we were through (even though my scales
Were a negative of you) as if I could ever not think
Of your hands in mine and your fiery breath
In every inhale, exhale, each night in your bed.

I am a dragon, not by nature, but by being molded
From an existing beast, scales pressed into clay
And fired in the kiln of your lungs, hardened and let loose
Upon the world. I have cracked
And chipped a thousand times
But still in the mirror I see my eyes in your face
And wonder if you'd snap and snarl to see my theft
Of who you are—as if I had a choice, as if I was anything
Before you came and carried me away.



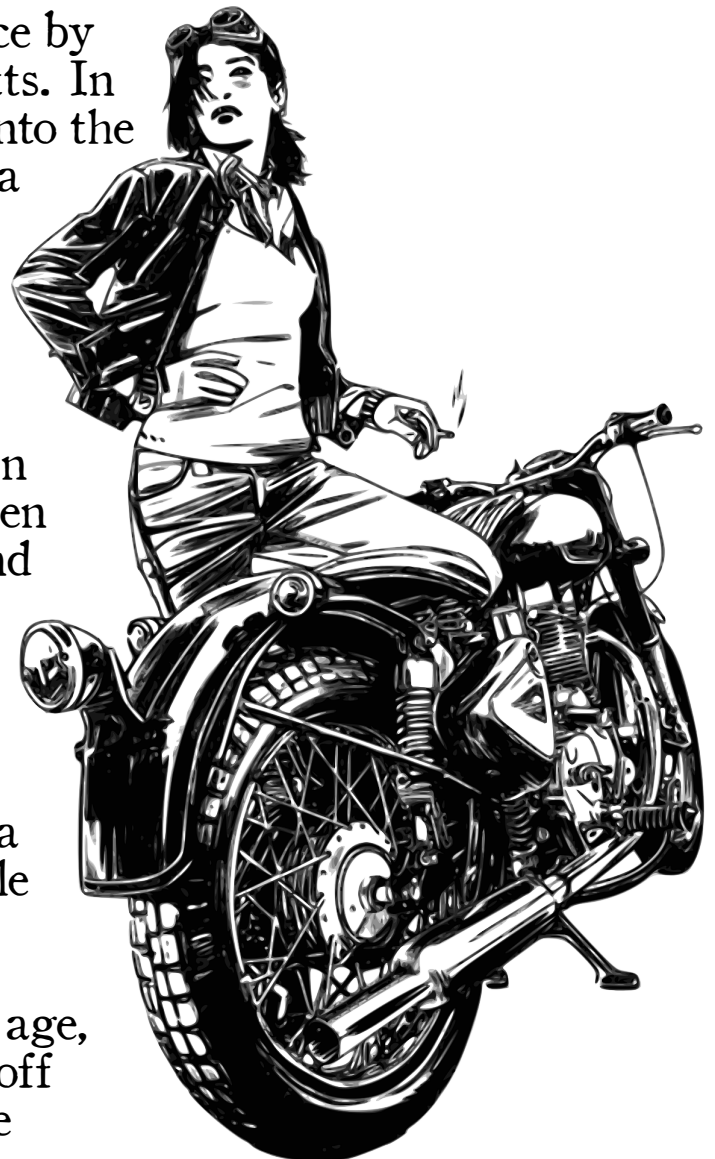
reased Fur

By Reese Pender

In the 1950s and 1960s, all across America, you could find pockets of so-called 'greasers'. Groups of delinquents, racing on motorcycles up and down the streets with their girlfriends. Leather and denim jackets, slicked back hair, white shirts, black or brown boots. The smell of pomade, Vaseline, gasoline, and cigarette smoke. The sound of idle chatter and motorcycles rumbling. This subculture had mostly died off by the 70s and 80s, and yet some small pockets of greasers still remain.

You wouldn't expect to find greasers up in New England, not with the salt chewing through vehicles like hard candy. Especially not in a place by the ocean, like coastal Massachusetts. In the south of Salem and extending into the north of Swampscott and Lynn sat a small area often called 'Werewolf Alley', though it had no official name. Salem was known mainly for witches, so the werewolves often got overlooked. Since the 40's, werewolves had often been sighted in this area. The locals are split between people who believe in werewolves and those who don't.

Alex had moved in to the neighborhood a couple months ago. To them, the elusive greasers of Werewolf Alley were something of a mystery. They had heard the rumble of motorcycles, seen the leather jackets and slicked back hair. The greasers seemed to be around their age, somewhere between 20 and 25 just off appearances alone. Their bikes were



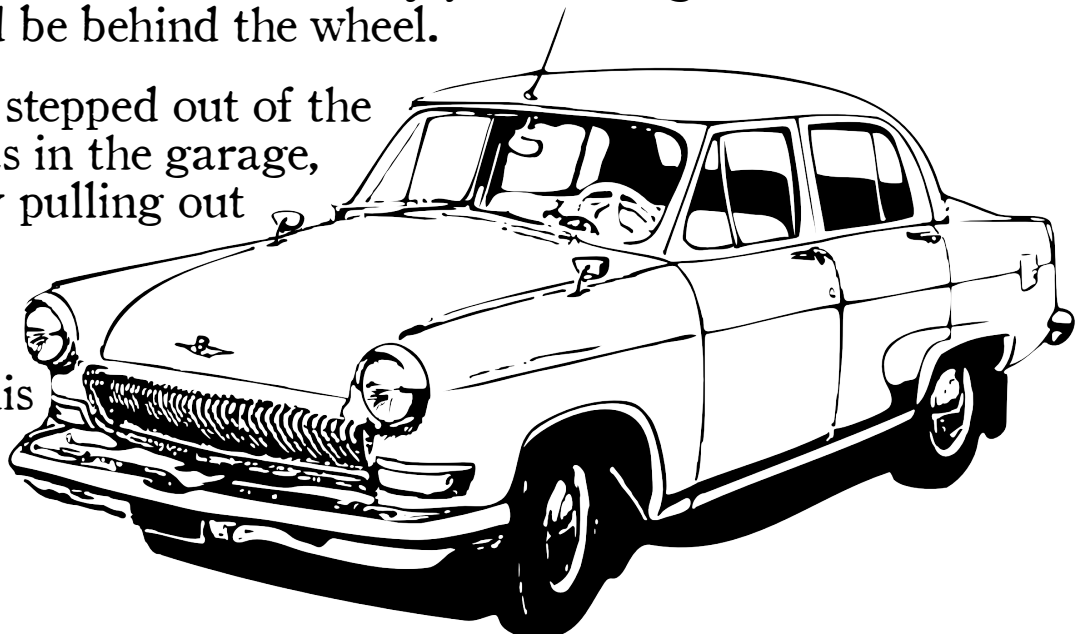
classics, ones from the 50s and 60s that seemed to be painstakingly well-maintained. Ones that were blatantly labors of love. Men who kept their appearances just as maintained.

The humdrum of daily human life was something anyone would grow tired of. For Alex, it happened sooner than most. They worked as a mechanic for a local shop, nothing flashy or fancy. Work for most of the day fixing up someone's car, shower when they get home, watch TV, go to bed. Mechanic work was fun, at the very least. Some unique problems showed up every once in a while to make things fun.

Beneath all the clothes, but above the skin, it always felt like there was something extra in between. Unseen, but felt. Something that drove them to a place given the nickname of Werewolf Alley. Nothing they were ready to unpack, really. Nothing they knew how to unpack. Still, they worked as much as they could. Their house was rented, but thankfully the person who owned it was willing to sell it to them once they managed to scrounge up enough money.

One day, something new happened. One of the greasers turned up at the shop at the tail end of their shift. Not with one of their motorcycles, but what they assumed to be a beater car. A Toyota Corolla, probably from the late 90s. The loud grinding of brakes and the rather loose-looking front left tire were the first thing they noticed, followed by the expired inspection sticker. It was only fair, since snow was supposed to start flying soon. It would explain how the bikes stayed in such pristine condition. Jack, the shop owner, had told them a Corolla would be coming in to get checked out and fixed. They just didn't guess that a greaser would be behind the wheel.

The man stepped out of the car once it was in the garage, rather quickly pulling out a comb and nervously maintaining the shape of his pompadour. It took him a



minute to actually speak to Alex, muttering to himself about how much the repairs and everything were gonna dent his bank account.

"You're uh... one of the mechanics here, right?" The man asked.

"Yeah. That's why I have a name tag." Alex teased, chuckling a little. "I'll get it in position for the lift. What's your name?"

"Max." He replied, stepping aside for a little. "Never seen you before, you new around here?"

Alex climbed inside the car as they spoke. "Yeah, been here a couple months. Werewolf Alley, huh? Haven't seen any werewolves. They should call it Greaser Alley instead."

Max seemed to freeze up for a moment, his comb sinking back into his styled hair as he spoke. "Hey, uh... don't get the wrong idea or nothin', me and my pals don't go around causing trouble. We just like the style and the bikes."



They let out a chuckle, moving the car into position for the lift before shutting it off and stepping out. "Yeah, well, I haven't heard anything like that. Just that you guys go around on your bikes and hang out around the area. And the werewolf stories, but I don't really believe those."

"You don't?"

Pressing the button to start the lift, they shrugged at him. "Seeing is believing. Haven't seen it. No photos or anything that don't look like they were taken on a potato."

Max let out a stiff laugh, as if he was scrutinizing their

disbelief in lycanthropes. Regardless, the Corolla quickly lifted into the air as Alex grabbed a flashlight and began to check out the obvious and not-so-obvious in terms of damage. Rotors and brake pads were entirely coated in rust on all four tires. The suspension was fine on 3 of the wheels except the front left. The tie rod was rusted through entirely and would need to be replaced. Nothing else seemed out of place.

"Okay, so, you need pads and rotors. Calipers seem fine. Front left needs a new tie rod. Seems solid aside from that. Could probably use new spark plugs and fresh fluids. Nothing I wouldn't expect from a car of this age. I'll probably have to check with the boss on the price, but I'd have to guess... I dunno, between four and six hundred for all of that. Two-fifty for just the tie rod."

The man let out a brief sharp whistle, his comb sinking back into his hair. He paused for a second, taking his phone out of his pocket. After a minute of texting someone back and forth, he let out a sigh. "Yeah, I think I can do that. Uh... I'll just let you guys do the whole thing, I think."

Alex nodded, writing down a list of required and optional maintenance before handing it over to Max. They gestured towards an office window in the back of the shop before starting to lower the car. "Go talk to my boss, you can see him in his office. Hand him the list, he'll talk to you about what the price would really be and what he can do for things like payment."

The greaser nodded, letting out a timid 'thanks' as a response before entering the office. They let out a sigh once he was out of sight, leaning against the side of the car momentarily. Having to do an extra thing last minute always killed their energy for the day. They gave their boss a wave through the window, who gave a wave of acknowledgment back. They punched out on the 60's-era machine before they walked home.

Shower, change clothes, cook a meal, watch TV, go to bed. That was their usual routine, though they only got through two out of five steps. By the time they would usually begin cooking, they heard something familiar. The rumbling of motorcycle engines, the ones belonging to the greasers of Werewolf Alley.

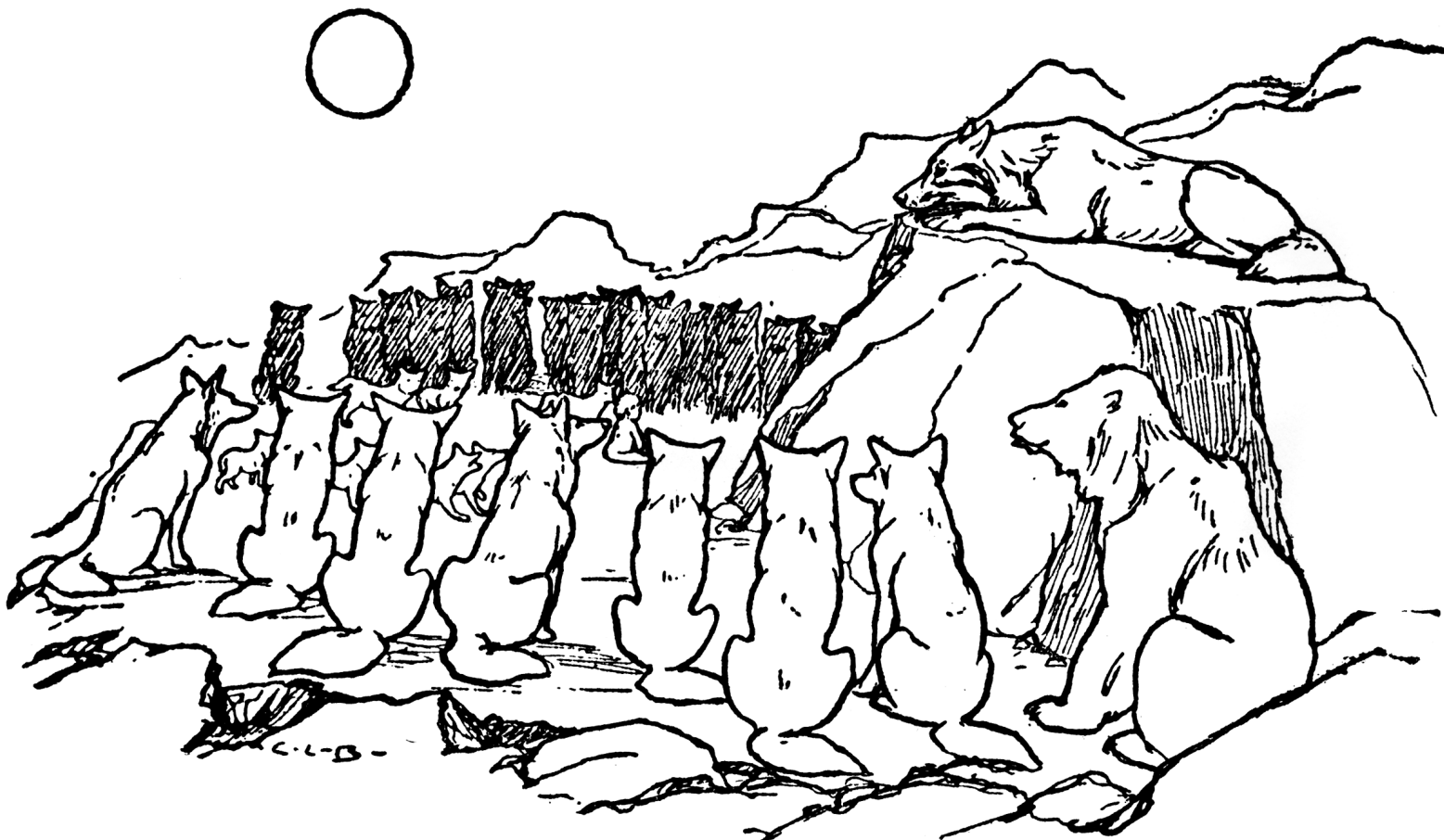
What was unusual was the fact that the engines didn't move beyond their house. A few seconds later, someone knocked on the door.

When they opened it, they were met with seven people, all around the same age. Masculine presenting, similar clothing, Most had slicked back hair, some had similar styles achieved through coaxing and teasing their curlier hair. Different races and ethnicity, but still a cohesive group. The one closest to the door, the one who knocked, seemed to be rather tall. Brown leather jacket, white tank top, jeans, and brown combat boots. Dirty blond hair in the elephant trunk hairstyle. When he spoke, he seemed rather friendly and excited to speak with them.

"Hah, hey. My boy Max told me you're new in town, helped him get a good deal on fixing his beater. Wanted to put a name to the face. Alex, right?"

They paused for a minute, surprised at the sudden visit. Nobody would really expect such a visit, especially not from a large group. "Ah- Uh, yeah."

The man stuck out his left hand, smiling. "Ray. Nice to



meet'cha. People around here, uh... aren't too fond of us, usually. Perception of us still stuck in the movies 'n shit that show greasers as womanizers who like to cause trouble. I just wanted to show gratitude."

They took his hand, shaking it firmly. Though, they were curious. "And just how did you want to show gratitude? You don't happen to have a twelve-ounce steak?"

Ray let out a laugh, returning the handshake but keeping it short. "Nah, nothing like that. I just wanted to know if you wanna go on a ride with us. Jaden's the only one with room for two on his bike though."

It was probably the most exciting thing that would happen to them that week. A break from the slog of daily work. So they asked one question, "Why not?" Grabbing their keys and slipping on their shoes, they locked the front door as they headed out with the group. Who they assumed to be Jaden, a bare-faced black man with his coily hair teased into a pompadour of sorts, called them over. They hopped on the back of his motorcycle, one that seemed to be from the modern era instead of the 40s-60s.

"You like the bike? It's a hell of a lot newer, but I like a more comfortable ride."

Alex let out a chuckle. "Yeah, not bad."

Almost in unison, the kickstands of the motorcycles all went up. Alex put their hands on Jaden's shoulders, holding on tight as the bikes all began to take off. They enjoyed the feeling of the wind in their hair, against their skin. Even if it was cold. Their hair flew through the wind, their loose jacket almost taking off. In their mind, they could almost feel like... more. Something other than human. That was a thought to decipher later, of course.

As the sun collapsed further and further into the horizon, the air grew colder and colder. The night came closer and closer until the last glimpses of the sun sat in the distance. The wheels came to a stop back in front of Alex's house. The entire time, no words had been exchanged. Nobody said anything to each other. They all followed the lead of the person in front of them, with

Ray heading the charge. They very carefully hopped off of Jaden's bike, letting his bike stay upright.

"Thank you guys for the ride." They said, a grin stuck on their face. They hadn't had that amount of fun in a while. "Can.. . I come with you again tomorrow?"

Ray looked around to the other members of the group. "Well, what do you think boys?" he asked. He was answered with a unanimous cheer of approval. "Seems like a yes. I'll see you tomorrow night around the same time, grease monkey."

"Sounds like a plan, biker boy."

With that, the group headed off, engines revving as they headed off into the distance. Going back inside their house, they finally began to cook their dinner. In the middle of cooking, as the sun had fully set, they swore they heard howling in the distance. Maybe there were wolves in Werewolf Alley.

The next day was uneventful, at least for the majority of the day. Just a normal amount of work. The only weird thing was one customer's car horn somehow being activated by the window wipers. They got home, showered, changed clothes. That night, they'd ride again. Then the night after. Then the night after. It became part of their routine. They'd get home from work, shower, change clothes, go for a ride, make dinner, watch TV, and sleep.

A couple weeks passed. Alex got to know the others better. Got to know Ray better. This time, they dressed a bit warmer – long sleeve shirt and thick sweatpants. They waited by the window, listening for the sound of motorcycles to come by.

A familiar knock at the door prompted them to practically jump out of their couch, opening the door with a smile. It was around 5, just before night fell completely. Man, the colder seasons sucked in New England. Ray was there to meet them, though... it seemed to just be Ray for now? Alex tilted their head slightly as they looked beyond the biker.

"Where's everyone else?"

Ray just gave them a smile and chuckled, turning around

and walking back toward his bike. There was a new addition to it as well – a sidecar. Did Ray get that just for them..?

“They’ll meet us there. C’mon. We’ll be late.”

Alex put their work boots and winter coat on. They locked the door behind them, rushing over to hop into the sidecar. They grabbed the spare helmet as they heard Ray’s click as he fastened it. They did the same with their own, and the motorcycle sped off. Ray spoke up, his voice being difficult to hear over the wind and engine noise.

“WE... SHOW YOU ...COOL. PROMISE!”

“HUH?”

“WE’RE GONNA SHOW YOU SOMETHING COOL. PROMISE!”

They let out a chuckle at just how loud Ray had to yell for them to hear him, leaning back a little. The sidecar was definitely a lot newer than the bike. Comfortable and cushy. They didn’t feel like they were riding in a deathtrap, which was absolutely a bonus.

After a short ride, they arrived at Dead Horse Beach. The two stood up, putting their helmets in the sidecar. The biker took Alex’s hand, leading them to a sort of rocky cliff section with the rest of the bikers. He sat them down, asking them something... strange.

“Close your eyes for a bit, alright? Cutting it close with this one, but... just give us a minute or two, alright? Might sound kinda gross, but... yeah. Just wait.

Normally, they wouldn’t listen to such a request. It sounded, frankly, weird as fuck. But they felt... safe with these people. Even if they weren’t a biker or anything, these people treated them like family. So they closed their eyes. Groaning noises, complaints of pains and aches, and even some disgruntling cracking sounds. They ignored all of it. After a minute or so, Ray spoke up. He sounded tired.

“Open your eyes, Alex.”

Of course, they did so nervously. They were half expecting some sort of weird male stripper show to happen, it being some sort of prank or something from a friend. Totally something Angie would do. But instead, they were met with greasers – werewolf greasers. Well-kept luxurious fur abound, still recognizably the same people, but... different.

“You’re-”

A couple of the members they aren’t familiar with speaks up, laughing. The others let out quieter chuckles, Ray just giving a smile as he held his hand out to them. Max and Jaden sat by each other, holding hands as they whispered about the goings-on.

“Did ya think it’s called Werewolf Alley for no reason?”

“Only reason we’re showing you is ‘cause the boss trusts you.”

“If yer good in his books, yer good in my books, got it?”

Alex sat there in shock. They didn’t particularly know what to do, or how to feel. They dreamed of werewolves being real for years, and they were all right under their nose. Their face went red with embarrassment. They had been hoping for something like this for years, wanting some sort of lycanthrope to whisk them away from their boring life. They took Ray’s hand, feeling the texture of his handpaws against their palms and fingers as he spoke.

“You’re... like us, aren’t you? Or, at least, you’re supposed to be.”

They looked up at him, their head moving so fast they felt like they’d give themselves whiplash. How did he know? How could he tell? They had always wanted fur to feel the breeze with, a tail to express with, paws to feel and walk with, ears to hear everything as intended, a snout instead of a flat face. Sometimes, they could feel those traits. Ephemeral, unreal, but begging to come to the surface.

“How did you-”



“This is gonna sound cliché, but I can sort of... see it around you. What you’re meant to be. I can give that to you, Alex. You can be one of us. No strings attached.”

A million thoughts raced through Alex’s head as Ray pulled them into a hug. They couldn’t help but begin to cry, tears streaming down their cheeks and onto the werewolf’s leather jacket. He rubbed their back gently as they clung to him. They needed to get these feelings out somehow, and crying just seemed like the best way to let everything boil over.

They calmed down after a couple minutes, wiping their eyes on their sleeve and taking a few deep breaths in and out. Ray stayed with them the whole time, just sitting in front of them with a kind and understanding sort of smile.

“Does it hurt? Being a werewolf, I mean?”

Ray shook his head. “Nah, not really. When you transform, it sort of feels like you hit your knee on a desk or something. Not that bad.”

“...Don’t you have to bite me or something?”

The werewolf shrugged, letting out a chuckle.

“Actually, it’s not really the bite, it’s the saliva. Here, let me see your hands.”

Alex held their hands up, Ray grabbing them shortly after. Their hands were rough, more on the rugged side. Despite that, the cold still messed them up every year, without fail. They had been procrastinating buying hand lotion, so the skin between their fingers was dry and cracked.

“This is gonna seem a little weird, so just trust me on this.”

Before they could protest, Ray brought their left hand closer to his mouth, licking between their fingers. While they knew what he was really trying to do in the back of their mind, something else came to mind first. They pulled their hand back instinctually.

“Blegh, werewolf slobber on my hand...”

In response, the whole group started to cackle. They could hear Max say something about that being a 'new reaction'. Their hand started to feel... strange. It tingled, but didn't really hurt. Fur began to sprout from it. Ray grabbed them again, pulling them into another hug.

"Listen, Alex. It's... a little freaky to watch yourself transform. Try not to focus on it. Just focus on hugging me, alright?"

They nodded gently, closing their eyes. The warmth of the fur, accompanied by the tingling sensation, crept along their body. Moving horizontally, from one hand to the next. They could feel the fur sprouting out, the very structure of their body changing. It ached, but didn't hurt more than that. They could feel every single change, the last being a muzzle and ears. Afterward, they felt absolutely exhausted.

"Well, welcome to the gang, Alex." Congratulated Ray. The rest of the werewolves followed suit.

A question bubbled up in Alex's mind, though they weren't super awake and firing on all cylinders at the moment.

"How long have you... y'know..."

"Been a werewolf? Since birth. My parents and grandparents are werewolves too, even my great grandparents. I got my bike from my grandpa, actually. So did most of us. Max and Jaden were turned by me a few years ago. I've known 'em since 3rd grade. They've been a couple almost as long too."

"Damn. So your great grandparents are why it's called Werewolf Alley?"

Ray nodded. "They all moved into the same area together. I never really knew 'em, so I never heard the story on why here. My grandparents say it's 'cause everyone's so focused on witches, they'd overlook the werewolves."

Alex let out a long yawn, moving to sit next to Ray, leaning on him. They were feeling real sleepy, but they still wanted to make conversation.

"That's pretty cool. Hey, I don't have a bike, but I do have a '66 Impala. Is that good enough?"

He let out a chuckle, wrapping an arm around them.

"I'll just give you rides with me. I got that sidecar for my parents, but they don't like to be passengers, so that can be your seat."

"Okay."

"... You know, you can sleep if you want. I'll take you back to your place."

"... Okay."

It was getting hard to stay awake. Like all their energy had been used up.

They leaned on Ray, shutting their eyes. Letting out a yawn.

It was easier to sleep when everything felt... correct. They felt correct, as a person.

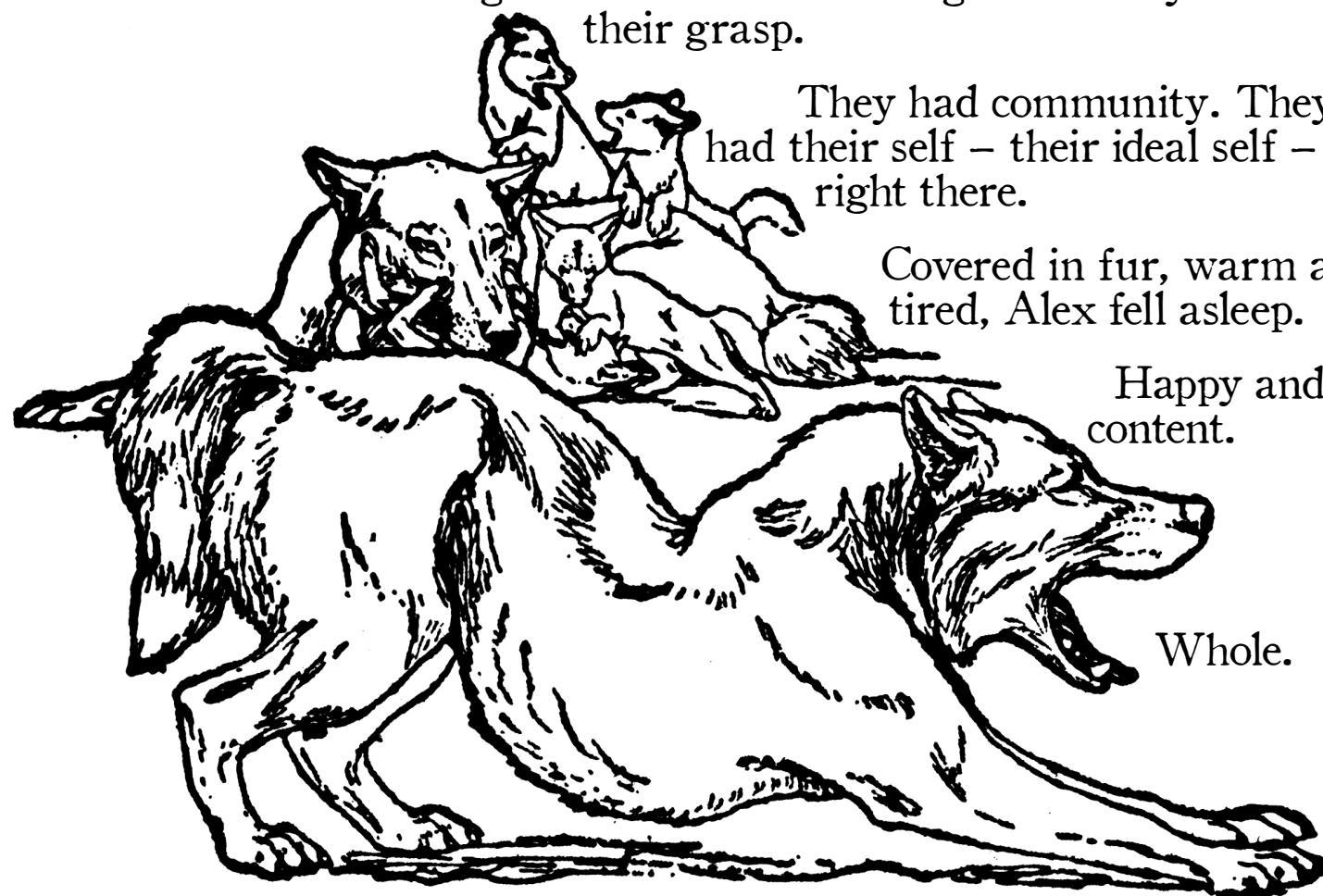
Like something that was there all along was finally within their grasp.

They had community. They had their self – their ideal self – right there.

Covered in fur, warm and tired, Alex fell asleep.

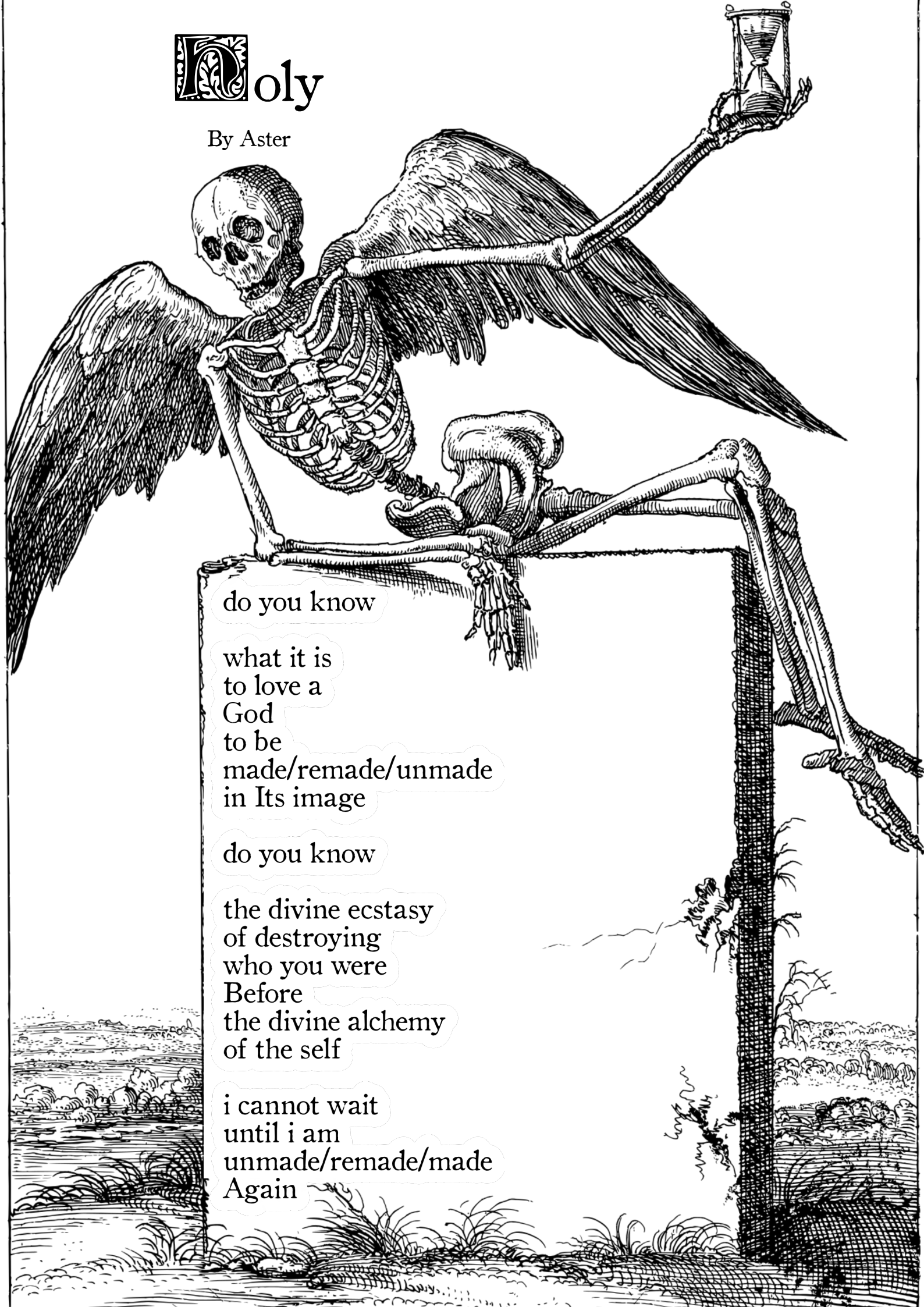
Happy and content.

Whole.



Noly

By Aster



do you know

what it is
to love a
God
to be
made/remade/unmade
in Its image

do you know

the divine ecstasy
of destroying
who you were
Before
the divine alchemy
of the self

i cannot wait
until i am
unmade/remade/made
Again

Home Is Just Out of Reach

By Stormy



When I think of home, I think of distant starlight that no longer touches my aching wings. I think of a planet that is welcoming and warm, where I no longer have to be trapped within wooden walls and a world of cold steel. Home is where I can stretch my wings out and let them shine in all their colorful beauty. But home always feels so painfully out of reach for me. Home always feels like a faraway place that I can only see in my dreams.



Just Take Myself For Walks

By House of Chimeras

Sometimes the simplest solution to something will just dawn on you and you'll think to yourself: "Well of course! Why didn't I realize it sooner?"

I liked my job well enough. The work was work but the pay was livable and the labor itself not soul-crushing. Coworkers weren't awful and were generally very friendly. Ironically it was the 1-hour break that I had trouble with for a while. Sounds ridiculous, I know. I have a full hour of break as just a part of my workday, and it gave me problems? Yeah, I guess it wouldn't make sense on its surface, would it?

So, when I started, I had never had a job that just gave you a 1-hour break. My previous jobs now behind me had all been ones where I kind of had to fight to find time just to scarf down some food. It was kind of a culture shock to just have an hour in-between work to do whatever.

And starting out I didn't know what to do with myself!

Between doggie instincts and years of having to eat my food or risk not being able to eat all of it left me with a propensity to wolf my food down in minutes. I'd gotten a little better over time, but I was still a really fast eater. So, I would be left with all this time afterward to do... whatever.

Being on my phone only kept me entertained for a little while each day before that no longer sparked any joy for me.



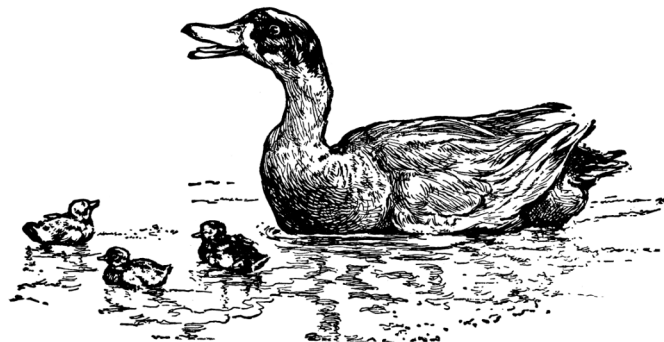


Then it just kind of finally struck me all at once.

The weather had been amazing that day. The temperature, the humidity, the sky – it was one of those days you just wanted to be outside rather than inside. And I had been sitting there in the breakroom, having finished my lunch already, looking out the window longingly.

Just on the other side of the street to my work was a nice park. There were lots of trees and grass with a pathway winding around all of it. There was even a pond at the center of the park that sometimes was visited by ducks!

That day I had thought to myself “I wish I could go out there,” but then I realized I could do just that. I was on break. I had an hour (well, a little less than an hour, realistically) to do whatever I pleased, pretty much. Including walking out of the very building I was in and sauntering my tail across the street to do a few laps around the park until I had to come back to work to clock back in.



It was brilliant if I do say so myself. And I do say so.

So that's how it started.

I was pleased to realize my little spark of genius gave me a ridiculous amount of species euphoria too.

I was taking myself, a dog, on a walk! It's nice when the simplest things make you happy.

So that is what I did. After eating my lunch every workday, I would just walk on over to the park and give myself a nice, good walk before having to go back to do human things again.

It was great. Being around the trees and grass was soothing. Smelling the fresh air, or, well, as fresh as city air can be I guess anyway, was amazing. And when the ducks were there, they made things so entertaining watching them do their little duck things. It took every ounce of my willpower to not want to go herd the little fellas around. Sometimes I'd get to see people walking their dogs, and I loved getting to see them.

Better still, a few weeks ago, I'd found myself a walking buddy.

Thuban wasn't their legal name, but they had asked to be called it outside of work settings after we got to talking. They worked for the same company, but in an entirely different department. They weren't my direct superior, but they did hold a slightly 'higher' position in the company than I did. We'd probably passed each other a dozen times without really noticing each other. We didn't actually meet until one day an uncertain voice had called out to ask if the pendent I was wearing was a Theta Delta.

Turns out Thuban was dragonkin and, ironically, a dragonslayer archetrole. Upon hearing that I simply had to know more. Thankfully Thuban humored me by using one lunch day's walk to explain the feeling of being a dragon but also



identifying with the dragonslayer. An identity that arose from a childhood where they fought against their own dragon identification and so came to relate a part of themselves with the figure going up against dragons in their own way.



Thuban in-turn liked hearing me describe my being a dog. They had listened intently as I described how I had come to the conclusion I was a rough collie.

Being able to openly talk about alterhuman stuff with someone was great and we quickly became friends. We also shared a number of similar interests beyond just the alterhuman stuff too. Thuban was as much as a sucker for horror movies, especially the really cheesy and campy ones, as much as I was. Somehow, Thuban had never watched *Young Frankenstein*. That simply would not do. I had insisted they change that pronto.

Getting to go over and not only take a walk, but also walk with my new alterhuman friend was the best. It made my phantom tail wag so much every breaktime.

Sadly, few good things come without conflict.

Bethany. You know how I said my coworkers weren't awful and were generally very friendly, well I need to amend that to

most of my coworkers weren't awful. Because there was Bethany and her two office friends who skittered about in their little shadow of a high school clique. I have never even bothered to know the names of Bethany's two friends because I don't work with them directly. You probably know or have known someone like Bethany – acts like she peaked in high school as one of those toxic popular girl stereotypes and never matured beyond that point. With her it was all talking behind people's backs, faux friendliness, and passive aggressive nonsense. She loved inserting her opinion even when it was never asked for. All. The. Time.

Her on-going goals with me mostly included her trying to convince me I wasn't 'womanly enough' (whatever the hell that meant), I was 'neglecting my role as a woman,' (barf) and needed to stop 'wasting time and do my womanly duties by marrying a man and having kids (oh joy, yet more misogyny...). Never mind that I, one, barely considered myself a woman at all, and two, had been very adamant about my childfree status. She had a problem with me, I'm not sure why but she seemed to have it out with women (or, in my case anyone she perceived as a woman) who didn't have any kids. She just seemed to especially want to hound me about it. But she always managed to skirt around any complains to HR about her behavior.

I'd call her a bitch if that weren't a terrible disservice to all female dogs everywhere.

Oh, and, of course, she was a huge busybody.

"So, where do you run off to during lunch? We hardly ever see you around anymore," Bethany asked one afternoon when we crossed paths in the hallway. My phantom tail dipped as my sense of dread rose. Darn it with human conventions of etiquette stating baring teeth at people wasn't acceptable.

"I just go to have some personal time to myself," I said dismissively, hoping for once she'd take a hint at my disinterest in continuing any conversation with her. Alas.

"Oh, is that what they call it these days? 'Personal time?'" She pressed. Blast, she wasn't letting this go, was she? I needed to find an exit out of this conversation fast.

“So...” she said slowly, leaning even further into my personal space and making my hackles rise, “Who’s the lucky guy?”
What?

“What? What guy? No. Not that it’s any of your business, but I just go take a walk in the park.” She gave me a look that expressed her sheer disbelief at my statement.

“Oh, come now,” she said briefly touching my arm playfully. Internally I growled and stepped back a little, but Bethany, as always, steamrolled on, “You know you can tell me anything.”

“There is nothing more to say,” I grit out, just managing to avoid growling out the words. I make to continue on my way but Bethany steps sideways to block my path.

Damn. I wish it was socially acceptable to bite some people. As a treat.

“So, who do you meet there?” Bethany asked, not caring how close she was to getting mauled... whether it was literally or figuratively was yet to be decided.

I sighed, “No one, Bethany, I told you before, I’m not interested in dating anyone.”

“Oh, come now.” Again, with the arm touching! “You’re not getting any younger. You need to grow up and stop being so immature. Settle down with a good man and actually do something with your life by having some kids.”

Bite. Bite. Bite. Bite.

Now, I am not of a breed particularly known to be aggressive... but that said, if someone yanks on my tail, metaphorically, that someone will get bit.



Years of reeling in my doggie-instincts was probably Bethany’s only saving grace from being physically or verbally mauled. It was so tempting. So very, very tempting in that

moment not to just lunge forward...

Bethany never stopped with her pushing and pushing.

But I could just tell how Bethany would perfectly play up being the victim if I lashed out in anyway. She'd cry about how she was 'just trying to be friendly' and how it's not her fault I was 'too sensitive.'

Well, if the only way to not come out at the bottom was not to play, so be it.

"I really should be going," I snapped out with as much flux-cheer as I could before turning and walking away from Bethany and ignoring her sounds of protest as I kept going.

Thank-goodness I was off for two days after that because I didn't trust myself not to bare my teeth and snarl at Bethany the next time we crossed paths.

My two days off were lovely, nothing more to say there.

My next workday had started out okay for it being work. I had put Bethany bringing up her opinion on marriage and children, yet again, behind me.

I should have known Bethany was not one to let sleeping dogs lie...

The day had been good. Lunch was behind me as well as another good day for my daily walkies with my new dragon friend. My phantom tail had been wagging, I had been in such a good mood. But then Bethany just couldn't help but go and pull my tail yet again.

I had just come back from an appointment after lunch that I had scheduled time off for. Upon walking in a work-friend, Taylor, had made a beeline for me.

"Are you okay?"

"...yeah why?"

"Bethany is trying to spread rumors." My first thought at hearing this had been to snark back about how that was

Bethany's favorite pastime around the office, but I knew Taylor wouldn't be talking to me if it had just been Bethany's usual gossiping.

"About what?"

Taylor went on to describe how Bethany was spreading a rumor that I was secretly having a relationship with a superior higher up in the company and I was doing inappropriate things while at work. She'd also insinuated I was somehow using this relationship to try to win favors or a better position in the company, somehow.

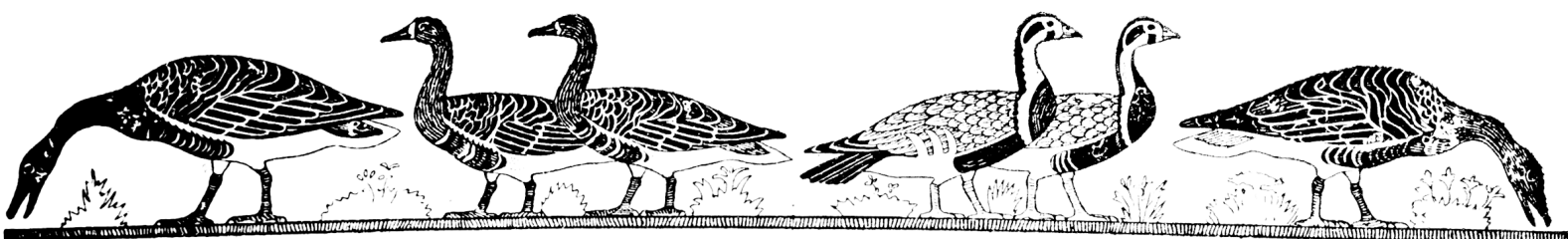
While the rumor was entirely false on multiple levels, I still hastily sent Thuban a text warning them about the rumor. Next, I went straight past my direct supervisor and right over to HR to yowl about, not only this situation, but the weeks of continuous harassment. My report was quickly followed by Thuban, Taylor, and several others coming forward to not only corroborate my story but, in the case of Taylor and others, give their own testimony about the shit Bethany had been leaving everywhere.

Nothing happened regarding Bethany that day. Or the next. I had started to fear nothing was going to be done with the matter. However, the day after I was walking down the hallway when I caught sight of Bethany following our manager and a head HR representative into an office. My last glimpse of Bethany was as the manager was closing the door rather firmly.

I didn't see or hear a peep from her for the rest of the day.

When I came in the next morning, I discovered Bethany's desk had been cleared out and given word that she had been 'let go.'

Oh, yes, today's walk during break was going to be so very nice indeed.





Infinite

By Aster

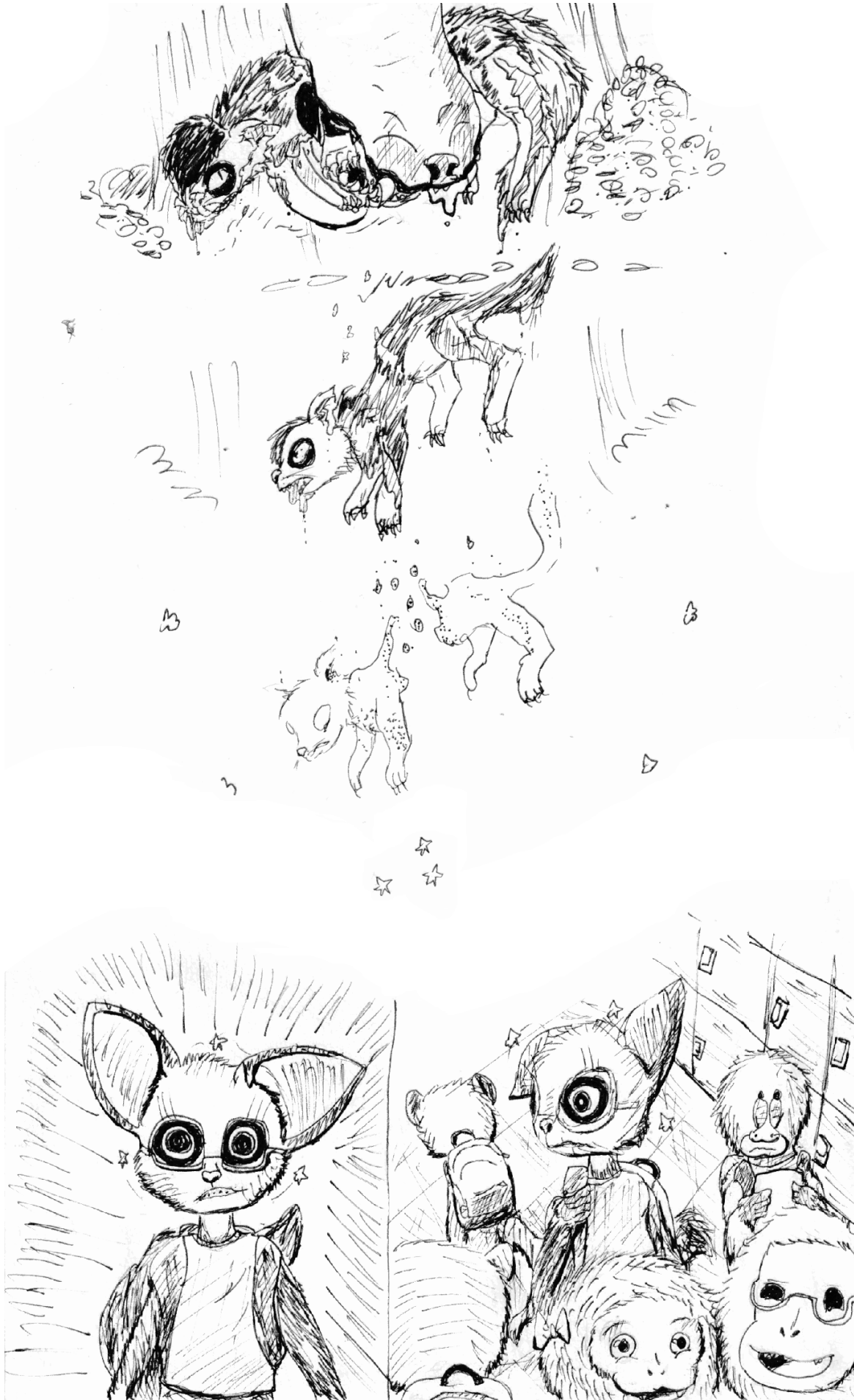
there are stars in my
lungs
in my
heart
under my
skin.

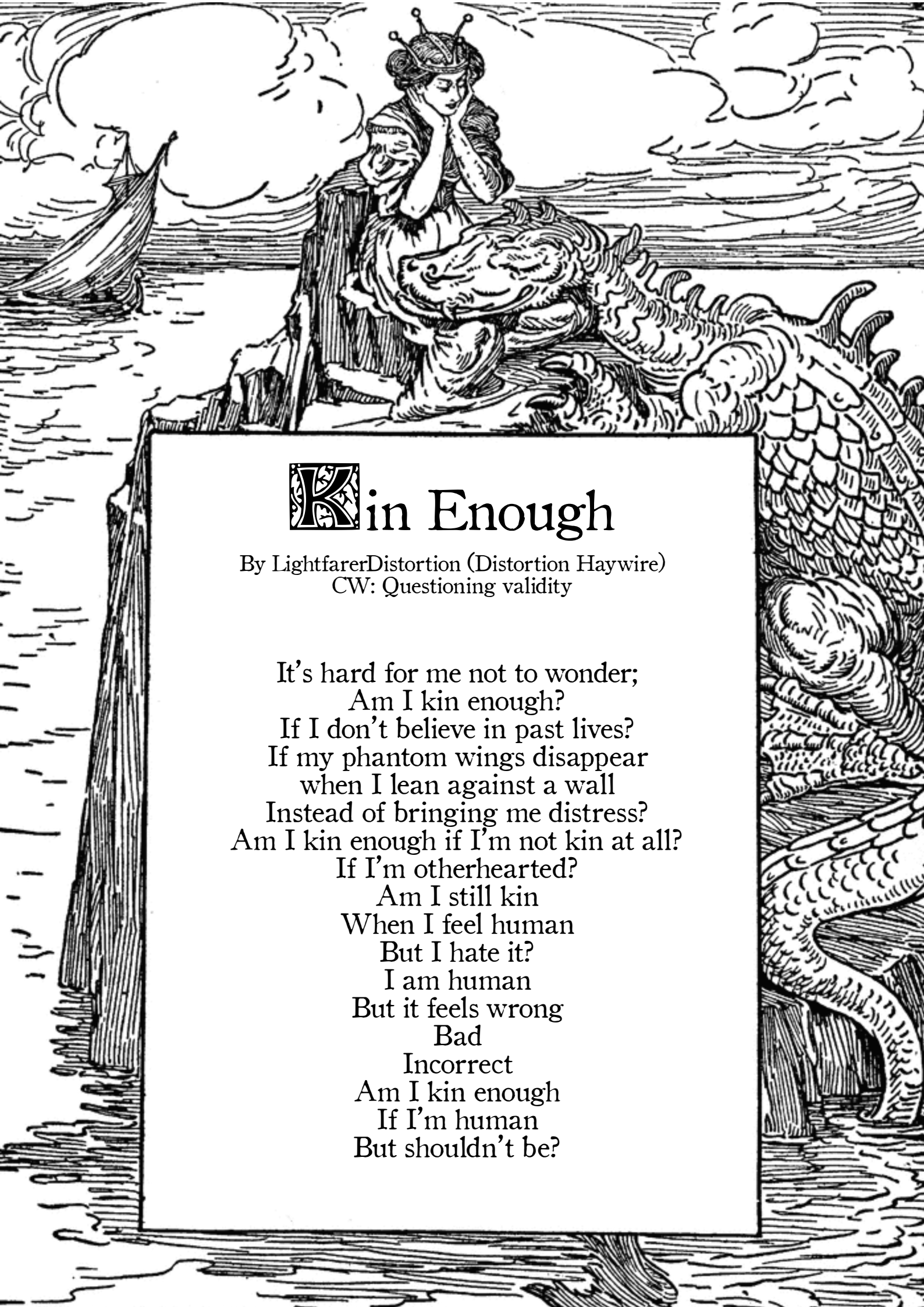
i am
Scalding
to the touch
i am
Blinding
i am
Incandescent
i am
Star Touched
and
Moon Lit

i am
All
of these things
and
None
of them

It's almost moonset, I'm dead. It's 9:52am, I need to get to social studies.

By Swiftpaw ex Anomaly | CW: Animal death and blood

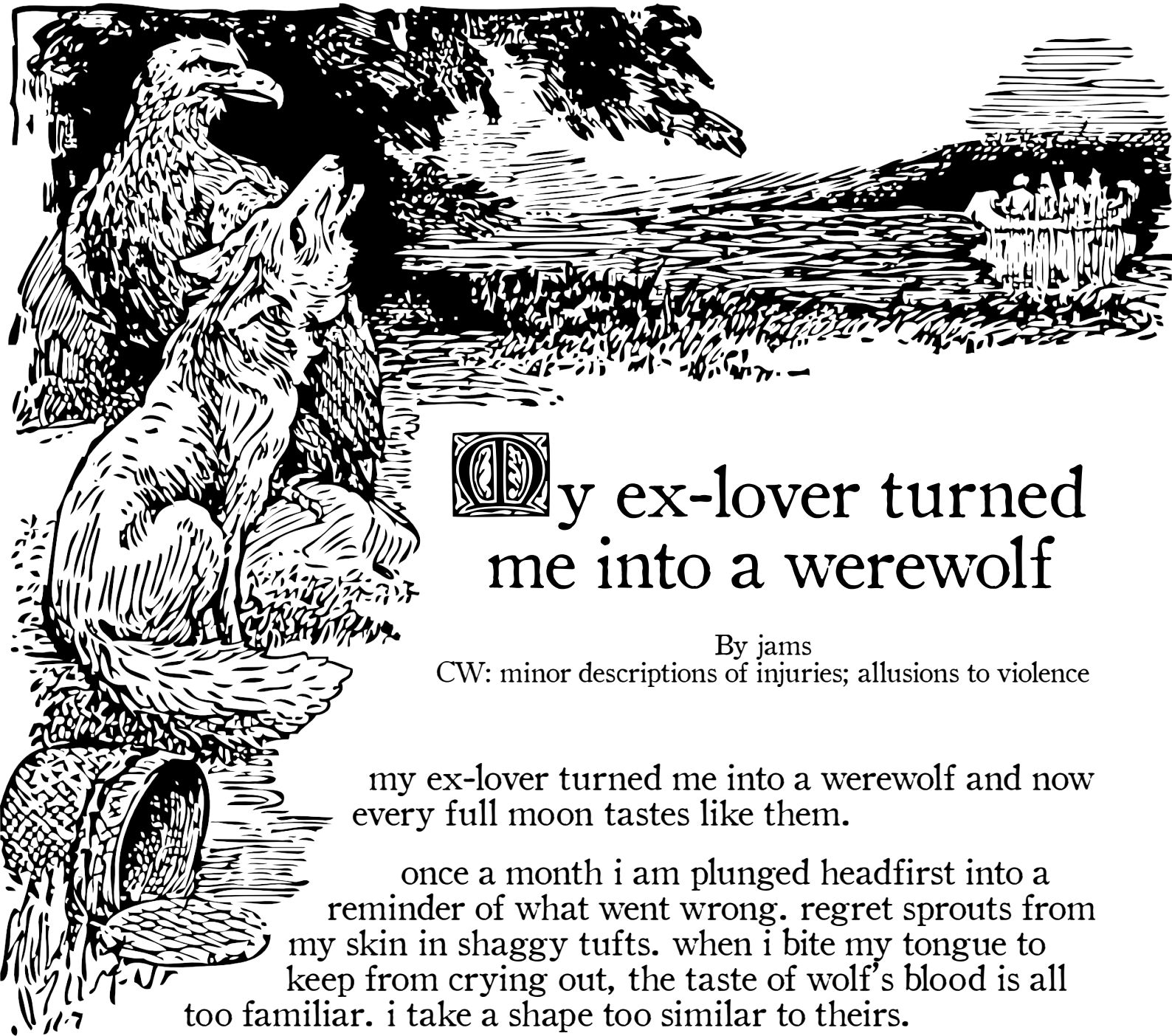




Kin Enough

By LightfarerDistortion (Distortion Haywire)
CW: Questioning validity

It's hard for me not to wonder;
Am I kin enough?
If I don't believe in past lives?
If my phantom wings disappear
when I lean against a wall
Instead of bringing me distress?
Am I kin enough if I'm not kin at all?
If I'm otherhearted?
Am I still kin
When I feel human
But I hate it?
I am human
But it feels wrong
Bad
Incorrect
Am I kin enough
If I'm human
But shouldn't be?



y ex-lover turned me into a werewolf

By jams

CW: minor descriptions of injuries; allusions to violence

my ex-lover turned me into a werewolf and now every full moon tastes like them.

once a month i am plunged headfirst into a reminder of what went wrong. regret sprouts from my skin in shaggy tufts. when i bite my tongue to keep from crying out, the taste of wolf's blood is all too familiar. i take a shape too similar to theirs.

their lycanthropy was like a well-fitting glove, smooth and slick against their skin. it felt nothing but natural to them, and i watched them take to four legs like a fish to water. they were born this way from the very beginning.

i lose time. they never lost time, and i know it's because i'm so young, so new. i wake up on sodden forest floors, surrounded by bones, and it feels like that day all over again. i return to my home to find it empty, but to my too-sharp sense of smell, they linger in each room, waiting to greet me.

my lycanthropy is like an extra limb, unwieldy, hastily affixed. it gets in the way more often than not, turning my movements clumsy and confused. it's unnatural to me, seeping out of a body that it wasn't meant for.

i remember how it felt when they sunk their teeth into my skin, pressed between their warm body and the cold ground. i didn't think i'd ever have the chance to regret it. i couldn't see a future without them, couldn't conceive having to navigate this new body alone. it was an impossibility to me — they said they'd stay, so why?

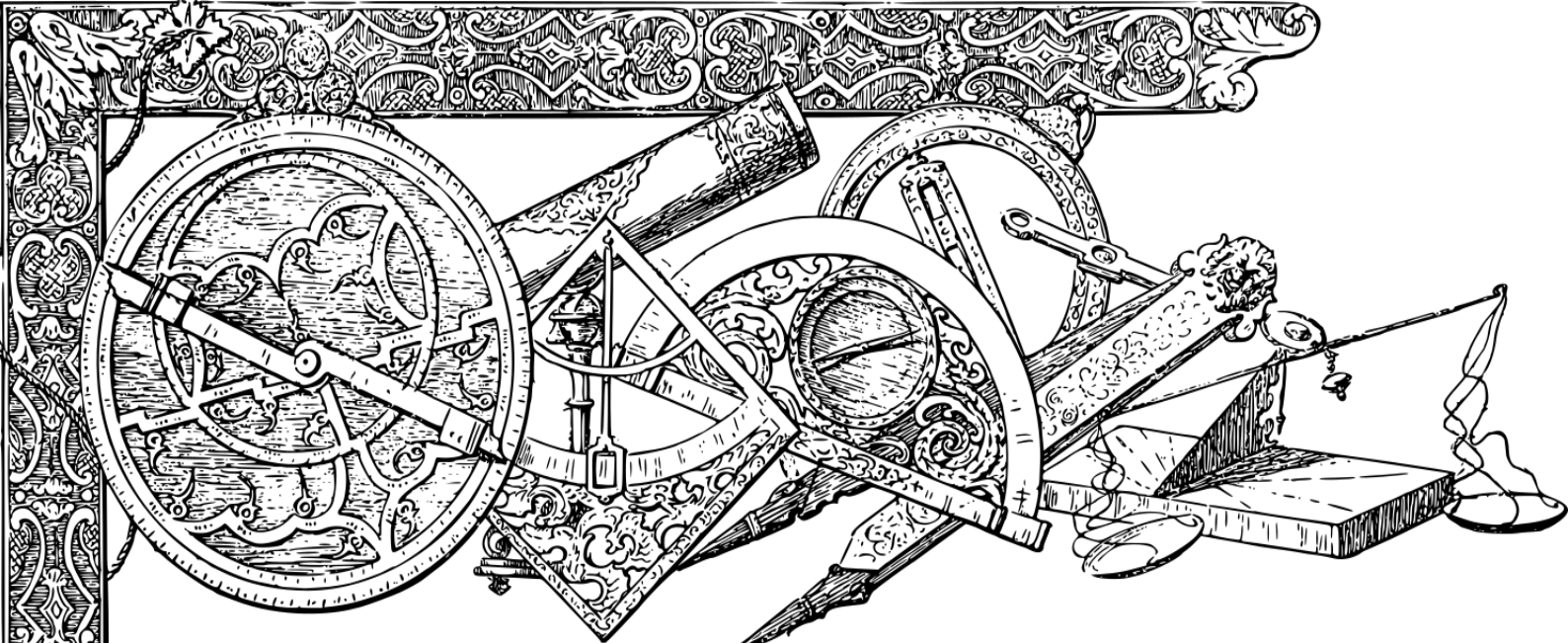
of course, the beast would fear the hunter. and even when it became poison, i kept a silver bullet always clutched between my teeth.

my lycanthropy is like a wound, weeping and drooling. it's like the bite never healed, as if the scent of blood and petrichor follows me wherever i go. perhaps it's the stench of death that makes people turn away from me, but i've had that all my life. they claimed not to smell it, but i know now how cuttngly sharp it truly was to them.

they were a wolf, and i was human. now i am the wolf, and they are gone.

i never saw myself in that way, but i let them bite me anyway.





rbital Resonance

By Maddy of the House

Group project. Enceladus slumped in its seat and pressed its forehead against the top of the desk, feverishly warm after supporting its squirming elbows dragging anxious heat across the metal surface. Its knee jiggled up and down in bursts between more bad news. Nine weeks. Assigned groups.

Not like it would've known who to pick if left to its own devices. When it had slunk into the classroom just before the late bell rang, people had already formed loud clusters full of familiar greetings. A stranger flicked their gaze over to Enceladus, regarding, as it crossed the threshold, but it looked away before it could detect any furrowed brow or downward curve of mouth.

It shuffled over to a chair in the back, away from the largest clique huddled near the window, and shoved its backpack under the desk. The bees swarming in its chest made it hard to tell if it was a good thing no one from Valley Middle School was in this class. It had seen acquaintances walking through the halls before the first bell rang, but the anxiety had been constant since the bus full of strangers emptied out into the high school's front doors.

If only Frog were there. Frog had to take world history, too, even in a different state. They would've made great partners.

Enceladus sighed. A thin film of condensation blossomed on the desk near its mouth as Mr. Something started to read names. It had prepared all night for these first day of school moments during its sleepless tossing and turning. Faced with reality, it braced itself with sharp ears desperate for bluntness as the inevitable sounds escaped his mouth.

“... and Group 8 will be Ruth, Erica, and Oscar.”

The name bit the inside of its ears and twisted an uncomfortable knot in its esophagus, deep, near its stomach, underneath the bees buzzing. It didn't look up in recognition until it heard the scraping of chairs against linoleum as everyone else got up to move desks around. It sat up and rubbed its forehead. Hopefully there wasn't a red mark.

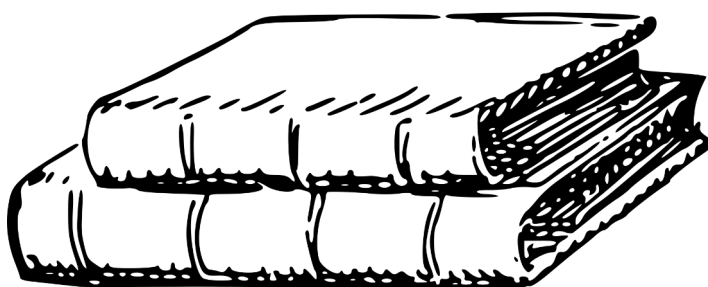
Groups of three began to dot the edges of the classroom until a boisterous group of kids announced their intent to sit in the middle. Chuckles and mild murmuring took up all of Enceladus' sensory processing power as it approached the last pair left without a third.

“Erica?” asked one.

Enceladus shrugged and took a chair beside them, keeping its gaze mostly on the tile floor. It rooted through its backpack to get out a Ticonderoga pencil from the new pack. After pulling one out, it frowned at the unsharpened tip. Head craning left then right, it found the pencil sharpener on the teacher's desk at the front.

“I'm Ruth.”

Ruth opened her blank spiral notebook and flipped to the first page. Enceladus glanced down at her paper as she wrote her name in cursive in the top left, and then looked back at the pencil sharpener.



"I go by Ozzie," came the other voice. "And..." In the corner of Enceladus' eye, it caught Ozzie pulling out a yellow composition book covered in flower stickers. The pause lasted long enough that it considered dashing over to the teacher's desk before Ozzie could finish as the dread of not being prepared chewed on its heart. Ruth wrote "Ozzie" down under her own name, relishing the cursive z's. "... I'm a girl."

All desire to leave disappeared. Enceladus looked up at Ozzie, who was looking directly at it, before they both averted their gaze. An uncomfortable thought crawled along the back of its mind: what if this was a mean joke? But even as the thought appeared, Enceladus registered some other indicators that suggested Ozzie wasn't just playing around: pink shoelaces, keychain with the anime character wearing a skirt, and well-used gel pens. Maybe not what a boy named Oscar would typically have.

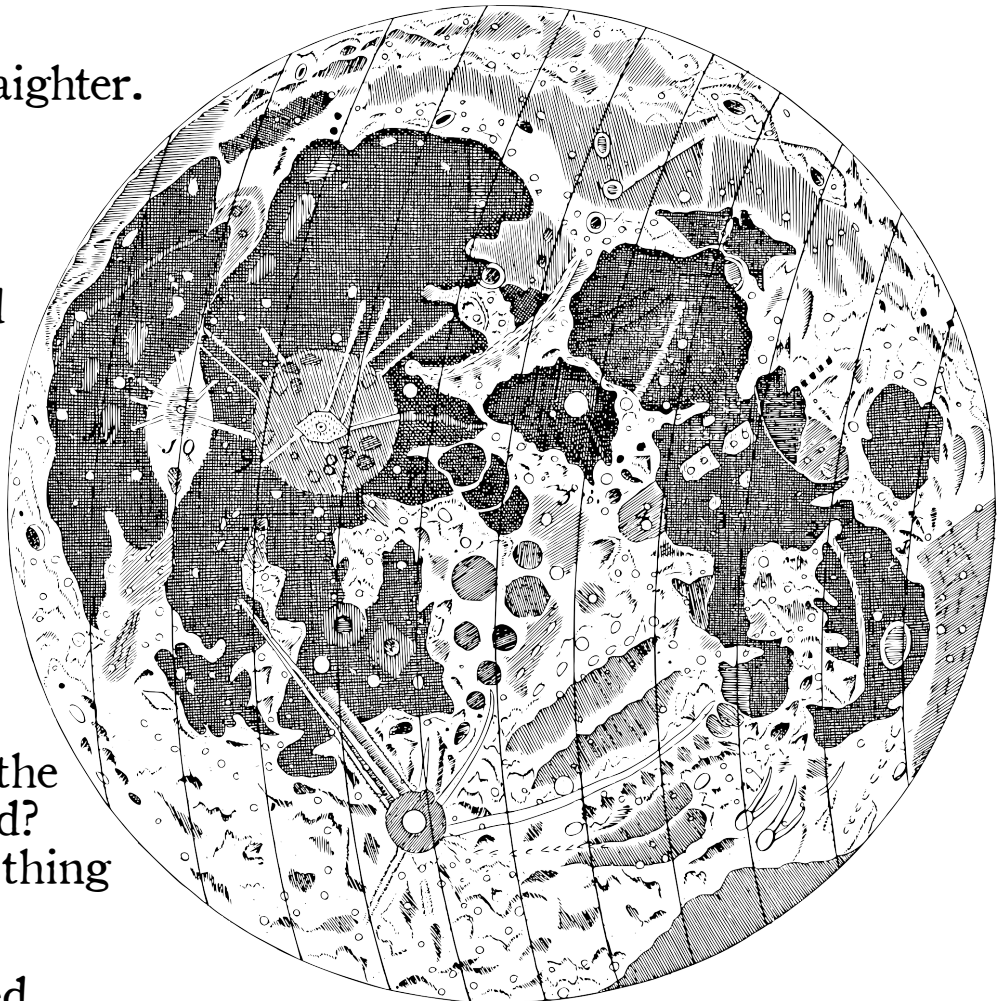
Before it knew why, before it could stop itself, it said, "I'm... not."

Ozzie sat up straighter.
"Really?"

Mouth suddenly dry, Enceladus hesitated and started playing with its fingers. An image of Frog giving it a big thumbs up entered its imagination and it swallowed. "Uh... yeah."

"Do you... like the name the teacher said? Or do you go by anything else?"

Enceladus shifted.



Waves of rolling ice melted and flowed through the knot in its stomach, drowning and freezing the bees. The world spun around the edges of its vision, twinkling into frosty bursts. Under its skin, astral ice crystals encircled a thin stretch of salty sea. The dull heaviness of gravity tugged its muscles down, into each other, just out of hydrostatic equilibrium, pulling it slowly under the desk, stopping only when its knee hit one of the desk legs.

“Enceladus.”

Ruth asked how to spell that, pencil poised, but Enceladus quickly shook its head. “I’m not... I don’t want the teacher to know.”

“Enceladus...” repeated Ozzie. “That’s a cool name. What’s it from?”

Enceladus shrugged quickly, a cryovolcano of anxiety shooting salt and ice into the empty space between its ribs. “It’s just my name.”

“Sure!” Ozzie agreed. “What are your pronouns?” It glanced up over its hands to see a relieved smile.

“Um...” Words coalesced awkwardly inside its cratered interior surface. “I don’t know... yet.”

“That’s okay!” Ozzie assured it, reaching out to touch its hand hesitantly. “I’ll call you whatever you want.”

“Me too,” said Ruth. “Let’s exchange phone numbers.”

After swapping scraps of paper with their numbers written on them—no cellphones allowed in class—the rest of the day went by in a blur. Every other class was a syllabus and first chapter textbook exercises, leaving Enceladus dizzy and alone with its thoughts, practicing in its head how it would tell Frog what happened.

Its parents weren’t home after school, so it threw itself into its bedroom, turned on its computer, and waited for Frog’s icon to turn green. While it waited, it opened its solar system on its 3D modeling software. Not long after it reprogrammed the orbits to stop the inner planets from spinning so fast, a notification

pinged in the bottom right of its screen. Within seconds of coming online, Frog appeared on video in a window on Enceladus' screen.

“Hey! How was school?” they both asked at the same time, inspiring loud giggles on both sides of the call.

“I like weightlifting so far. No syllabus, just weights,” said Frog, enthusiastically rolling up their T-shirt sleeve and flexing. “Definitely favorite class. What about you?”

“I have a group project in world history. For nine weeks,” said Enceladus. Frog groaned sympathetically, but it kept going. “Someone in my group is trans. Her name's Ozzie.”

“Woah!” Frog exclaimed.

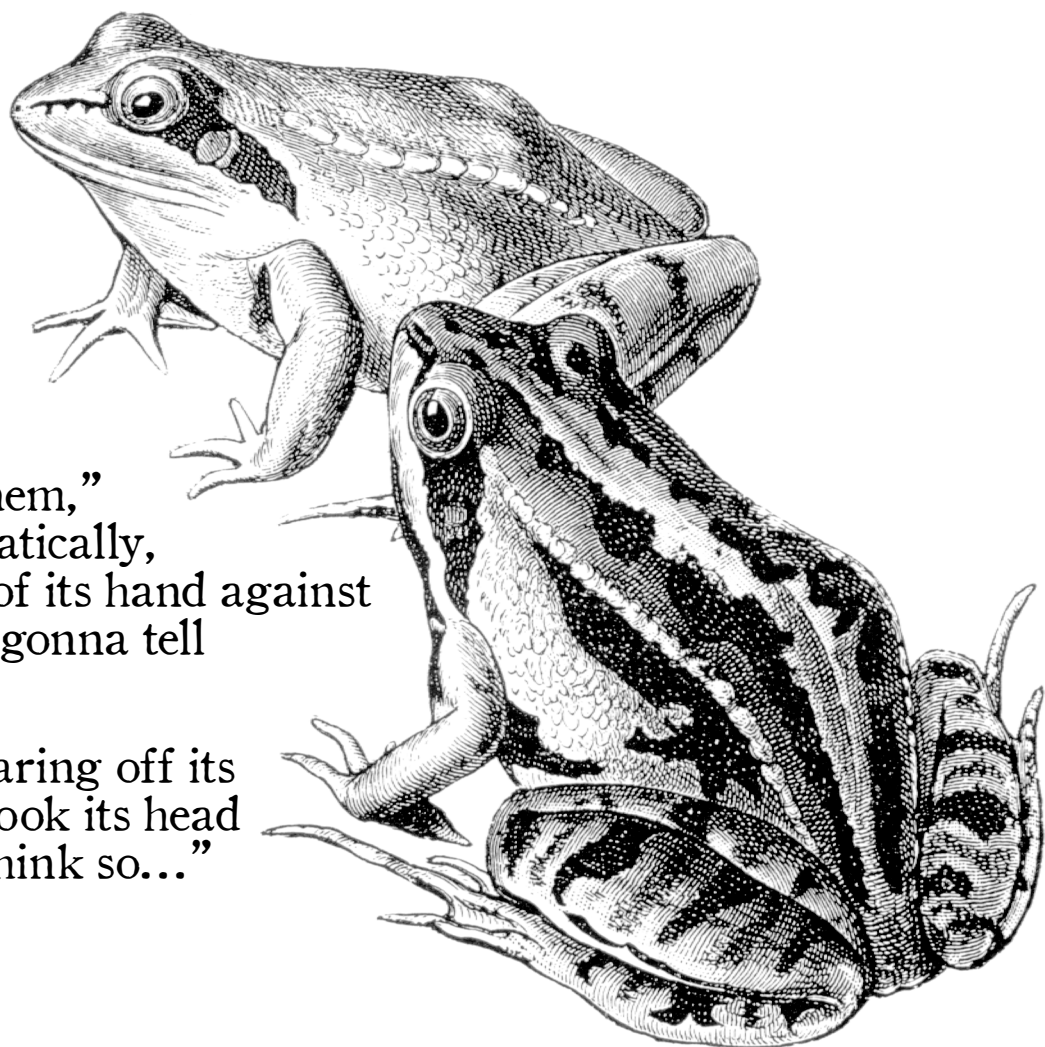
“And then I sort of said I wasn't a girl and then she asked my real name and so I told her it was Enceladus.”

“Woah!” Frog exclaimed again. “That's awesome! Lucky... I didn't meet any trans people, but I did tell everyone to call me Frog.” They grinned. “Now we're just hiding in plain sight... No one will possibly suspect that you are the moon Enceladus, and I a frog, for real!”

Enceladus grinned back. “Until you tell them.”

“Until I tell them,” Frog agreed dramatically, pressing the back of its hand against its forehead. “You gonna tell anyone?”

Smile disappearing off its face, Enceladus shook its head quickly. “I don't think so...”



Being a frog was one thing, but being a moon was another. The conversation with its parents about Frog had been distressing enough. Yes, they're a frog. It means that they feel like a frog in real life. Just call them Frog, please. Please. In comparison, the email that it wrote asking to be called Enceladus had been met with even more skepticism, even if there hadn't been any mention of the moon of Saturn. Just a request for a name change, which had been entirely ignored.

But Ruth and Ozzie didn't mind it. Ozzie even said it was a cool name, and Ruth took it seriously enough to write on a school assignment.

“... Well, I guess maybe.”

Frog gave it two thumbs up. “That's the spirit. Do it for me. Do it for yourself. If someone seems chill, you should totally say something. There's plenty of us out there. Maybe Ozzie's not a human either. That'd be cool of her. One of us! One of us!”

Enceladus put its elbow on the desk and its chin on its hand. Exhaling hard, it stared intently at the empty wall in the background of Frog's camera as they sat back, hands folded behind their head.

“... I miss you.”

Frog made a face and leaned forward again, slapping the desk with both palms. “I miss you, too. It sucks we're not going to the same school.”

“Yeah...”

“Yeah. For real.”

“Frog?” interrupted a voice from behind their door.
“Dinner!”

“Gotta go. Talk to you in a bit!”

Frog waved goodbye enthusiastically with both hands until Enceladus gave a little wave back. They kept waving with one hand as the other crept over toward their mouse and ended the video call.

It was just as well. Enceladus had homework to do. After dislodging the phone from the depths of its backpack along with the slips of paper, it programmed Ozzie's number, then Ruth's, into its contact list. Creating a group text, it typed a basic question, backspaced it all, typed another one, backspaced it again, and then threw the phone on the unmade bed.

It opened the 3D solar system again to mess with shadow rendering when the phone buzzed against the sheets.

New message.





ur Own Sort of Dragon

By Plushi Paws

“Dragon, I am not sure that I am a prince.”

“Of course not, you are my beloved pet.”

“No, I mean... gender-wise.”

“Oh. Are you a princess?”

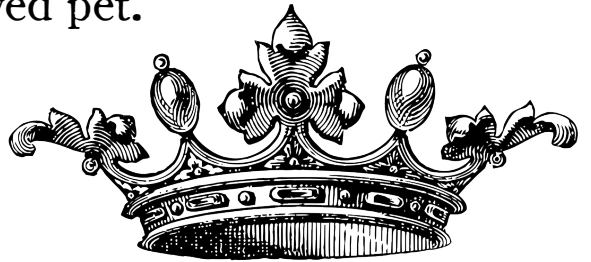
“No, I don’t think so.”

“Alright, dear. Then, what are you?”

“I think- well I’m not sure I am allowed.”

“You can be anything you want to be, my darling.”

“Well- and please don’t laugh- I think I’d like to be a dragon. ... Like you.”



The dragon purred and wrapped its long neck around the smaller being and nuzzled its nose on their head. “Then a dragon you are, my love.”

“But I’m worried I’m not qualified to be a dragon. I don’t have scales or wings.”

“Dragons come in all sorts of kinds. Many are scaleless or wingless.”

“And I’m rather small and weak for a dragon...” They sighed. “I mean, I am already fairly small and weak for a human.”

The dragon studied the being who was now a smaller dragon for a long time before speaking rather gently. “I am rather small and weak for a dragon too you know... It is something I never told you, and you couldn’t know because you have none other to compare me to.”

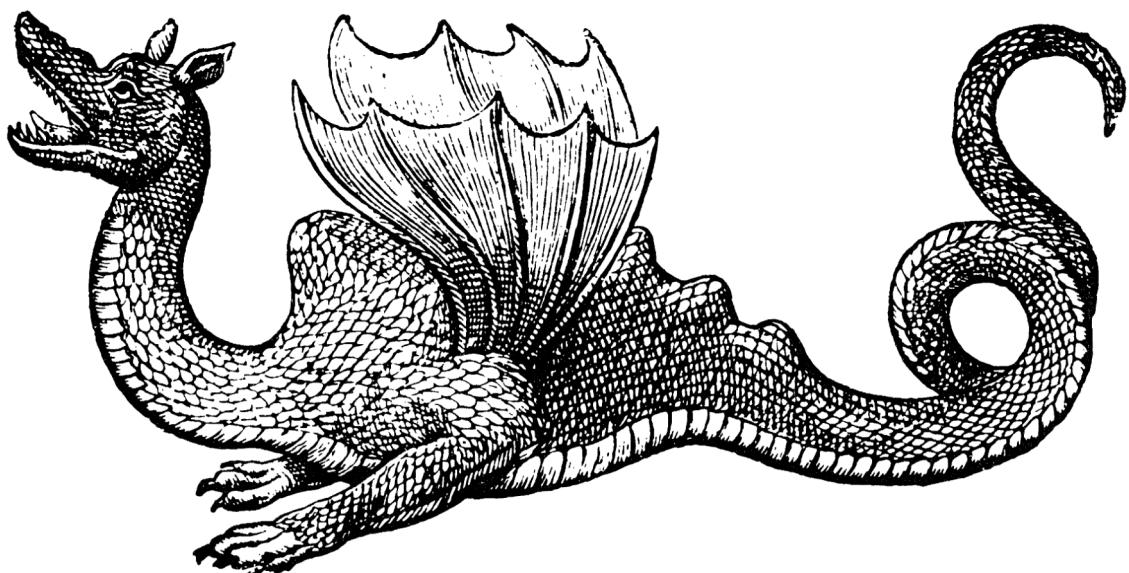
“What? But you’re so big and strong! You fly ten miles a day to hunt for us and you defend me from nosey knights who try to ‘rescue’ me!”

The dragon nodded. “Yes, but other dragons can fly for a thousand miles a day and hunt for an army, and they could fight off an army too. After fighting a single knight I become quite tired... This is why I live alone in this cave, away from other dragons. They harass me for my weakness, and try to push me to do more... they say what I am is not enough.” With this, the dragon lowered it’s head, seeming to feel ashamed.

The smaller, human shaped dragon kissed the larger one on the snout. “Well, you are certainly enough for me. You might not be able to fight or feed an army, but your hunts keep us both full and your claws keep us both safe. And I always look forward to curling up under your wings at the end of the day. You don’t have to be alone anymore.” They frowned, their brow furrowing. “It makes me angry how you were treated.”

“It makes me angry how you were treated! That is what drew me to rescue you. I could see your society was treating you the same as mine was... Pushing you to do too much when you were tired, not appreciating you for who you are... but I appreciate you. You always know how to make me laugh, and all your little faces are so cute. I always look forward to feeling you press against my sides at the end of the day.” It nuzzled them. “You are dragon enough for me, better than any other dragon I have met. You are enough.”

The smaller dragon nodded. “We are our own sort of dragons. And that is enough.”

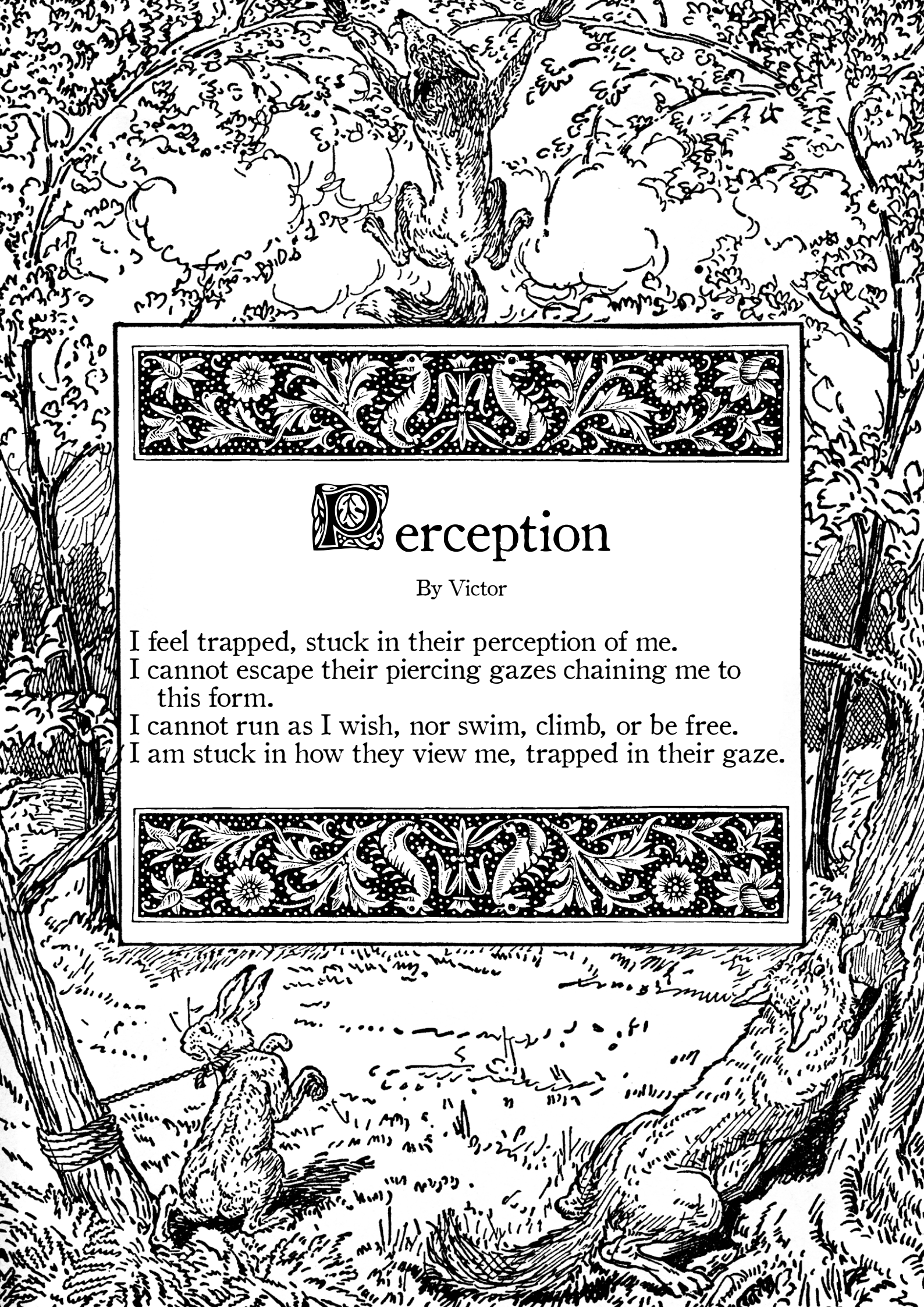




Perception

By Victor

I feel trapped, stuck in their perception of me.
I cannot escape their piercing gazes chaining me to
this form.
I cannot run as I wish, nor swim, climb, or be free.
I am stuck in how they view me, trapped in their gaze.





Remember

By Aster



sometimes i want to dig my fangs into something
and hold until it bleeds

i want the stars that make up my lungs
to corrode my skin and bleed into the world

i want to wrap my wings around my loved ones,
to protect them,
to keep them safe,
i need to keep them safe

~~because what am i if not a guardian~~
~~what am i if i cannot protect~~

i want my bones to stretch and pop
and reform me into something new

i want to fly into the stars until my lungs are empty
and all i am anymore is void and sky

i want to scream and cry and howl in languages
that even i cannot comprehend,
to bleed from my mouth and eyes
from the mere thought of those broken hymns

~~because what am i~~
~~who am i~~

i want to go home



Sacred Shadow's Demise

By Sya

The alien memory writhes.

It transcends millennia and lifetimes.

It warns and I still understand.

It is worse to forget a fallen friend than it is to remember their terrible end. At least then the sacrifices meant something. I promised to never forget despite this terror of knowing.

An endless void emerges from the oblivion between universes. An unnatural, inky blackness darker than anything in the known universe is the start and end of the reaches of your understanding. Your first and last warning within the span of a second.

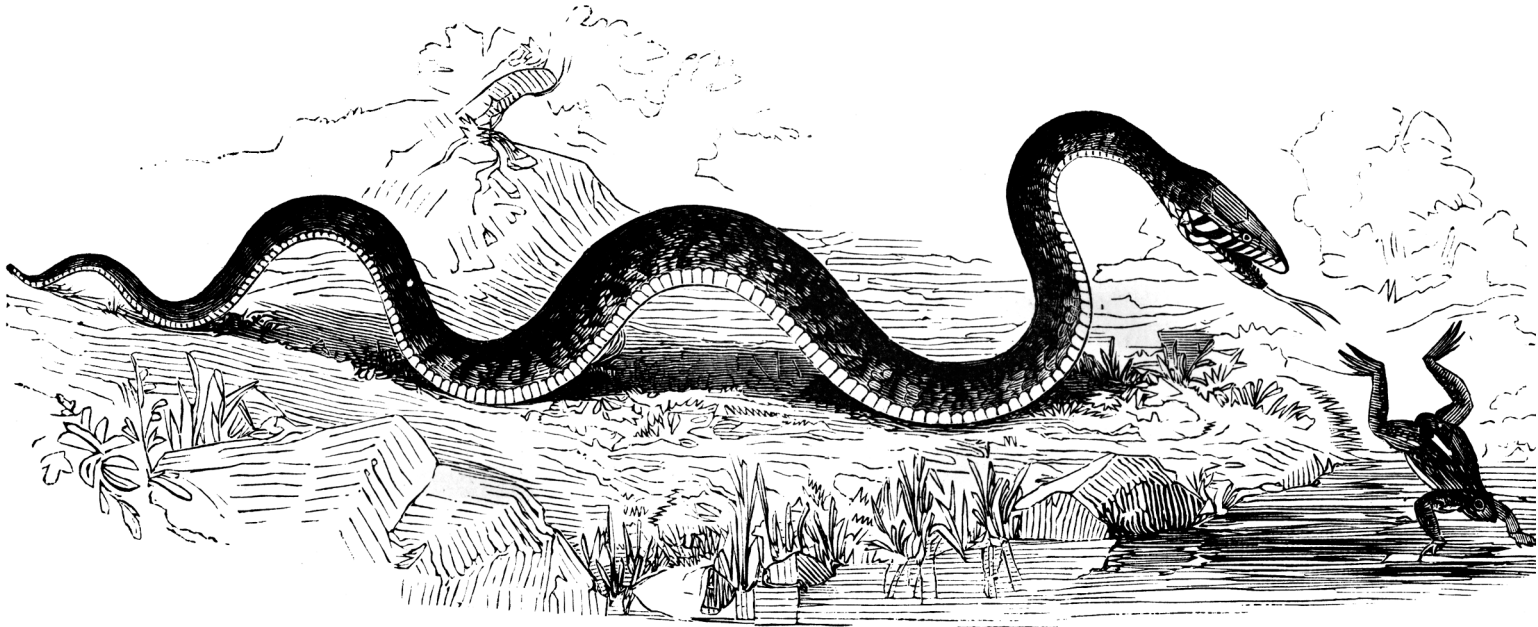
Witness within two crimson eyes the sum of all hatred, anger and evil of reality compacted into a point smaller than a neutron star but heavier than a black hole. A mortal mind was not made to withstand or experience it. The frays of the mind may find itself unraveling. Determination trained me to withstand this forever.

This few second glimpse into infinite madness offers a glimpse into utter devastation; devastation the likes that this universe has never seen before. Something once thought elusive that causes such infinite suffering beyond any apprehension is a force that must not be ignored.

A fallen entity of infinite power, the creator of all that seeks to undo all that has been done.

It wishes to deliver the universe back into emptiness. It hates for the aim of hating.

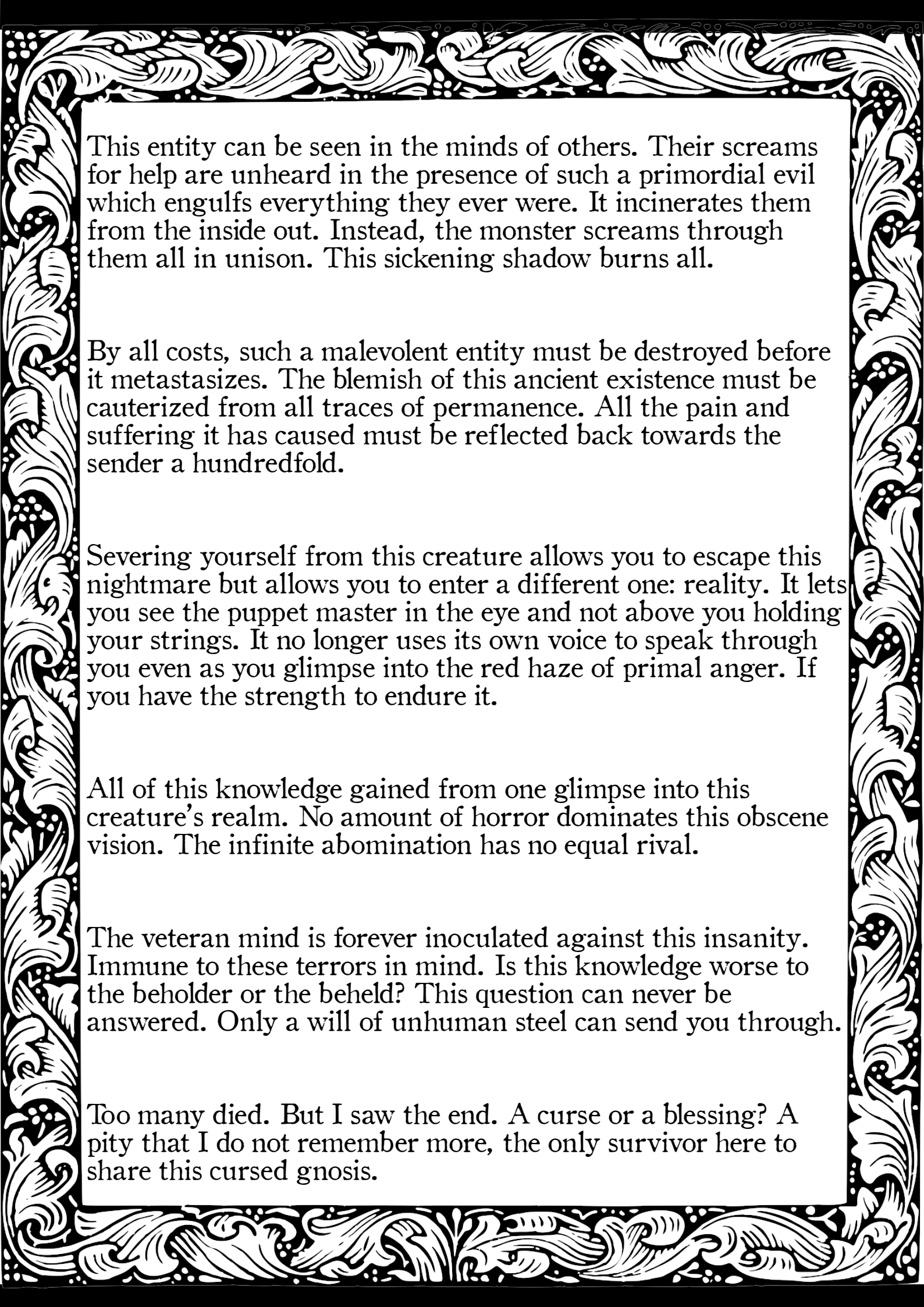
It wishes to see you suffer solely for existing. It is beyond reasoning. Running only prolongs your suffering.



Begging does nothing, praying yields no results because there are no other gods.

This was the creature you were praying for all along since the beginning of time. This entity laughs at your pleas, feeding into its endless disease like an unnatural war machine. It grows in strength with its sadistic cackles. Nothing will save this universe but yourselves.





This entity can be seen in the minds of others. Their screams for help are unheard in the presence of such a primordial evil which engulfs everything they ever were. It incinerates them from the inside out. Instead, the monster screams through them all in unison. This sickening shadow burns all.

By all costs, such a malevolent entity must be destroyed before it metastasizes. The blemish of this ancient existence must be cauterized from all traces of permanence. All the pain and suffering it has caused must be reflected back towards the sender a hundredfold.

Severing yourself from this creature allows you to escape this nightmare but allows you to enter a different one: reality. It lets you see the puppet master in the eye and not above you holding your strings. It no longer uses its own voice to speak through you even as you glimpse into the red haze of primal anger. If you have the strength to endure it.

All of this knowledge gained from one glimpse into this creature's realm. No amount of horror dominates this obscene vision. The infinite abomination has no equal rival.

The veteran mind is forever inoculated against this insanity. Immune to these terrors in mind. Is this knowledge worse to the beholder or the beheld? This question can never be answered. Only a will of unhuman steel can send you through.

Too many died. But I saw the end. A curse or a blessing? A pity that I do not remember more, the only survivor here to share this cursed gnosis.





Teeth

By Ace of Ghosts



I keep a box on our dresser, where I can no longer reach. It's filled with my old teeth, chipped and broken things that gave way to new fangs erupting from changed gums. We keep them for...sentimentality, I suppose. A little, rattling box of memories of times before. You'd think I'd want to be rid of them, to throw off any reminder of the tattered remains of my humanity and run free, but no. It shaped me, is part of my history. I've removed myself from humanity, but I will always be connected to it.



The transition was in some ways harder than the time before Dysphoria was a known factor, easy to handle in its familiarity. The changes were not. They hurt, most days, growing pains writ large as my body danced to a new song with each injection. My legs alone knocked me down for a month and a half, confined to bed or a hacked together wheelchair donated by my kin who had taken the leap long before I. My teeth were the most welcome change, falling out one by one in exchange for their deadly replacements. The worst was the fur, awkward puberty peach fuzz spread across my entire body, itchy as hell to boot. I was fired pretty quickly, turns out hairy paws are bad for food prep and a face stuck halfway between muzzle and mouth scares customers away. Good riddance.



The fear mixed with eagerness until I could no longer tell them apart. Joy at the new texture of my hair mixed with fear that it will never spread. Joy in how my nails sharpened and became dense claws mixed with fear that my paws will forever straddle the line between man and wolf. The anticipation of running in the woods, smelling of autumn and prey and family of all kinds, exacerbated the restless fear that I would never run again.



And yet, now I sleep curled at the base of his bed, proud in the change. Long, lithe muscle, beautiful in my simplicity. Soft fur belying sharp claws and hungry fangs. As long now as I was tall, massive and terrifying and graceful in ways I could never have been before. My intelligence is still human, but the undercurrent of instinct roars louder than ever, easy to lose myself in whenever I wish.



There are always dangers. Both to being other and also to being a predator. Fearful eyes see my teeth, my claws, the way my muscles move beneath my fur, and instead of beauty see danger. The fear is manageable. On better days, I provoke it playfully, offering approximations of grins and breaking into runs to show off. On worse, I ignore them, protected by law and the crowd. Worse are the pitying, the ones who look down. The ones who cannot believe I would choose this or who treat me like a pet dog to be played with. I wear no collar or leash, barely bending to “public decency”, and at these people I snap. Growling, lips pulled back to reveal the fangs I worked so hard for, until they pull back or walk past.

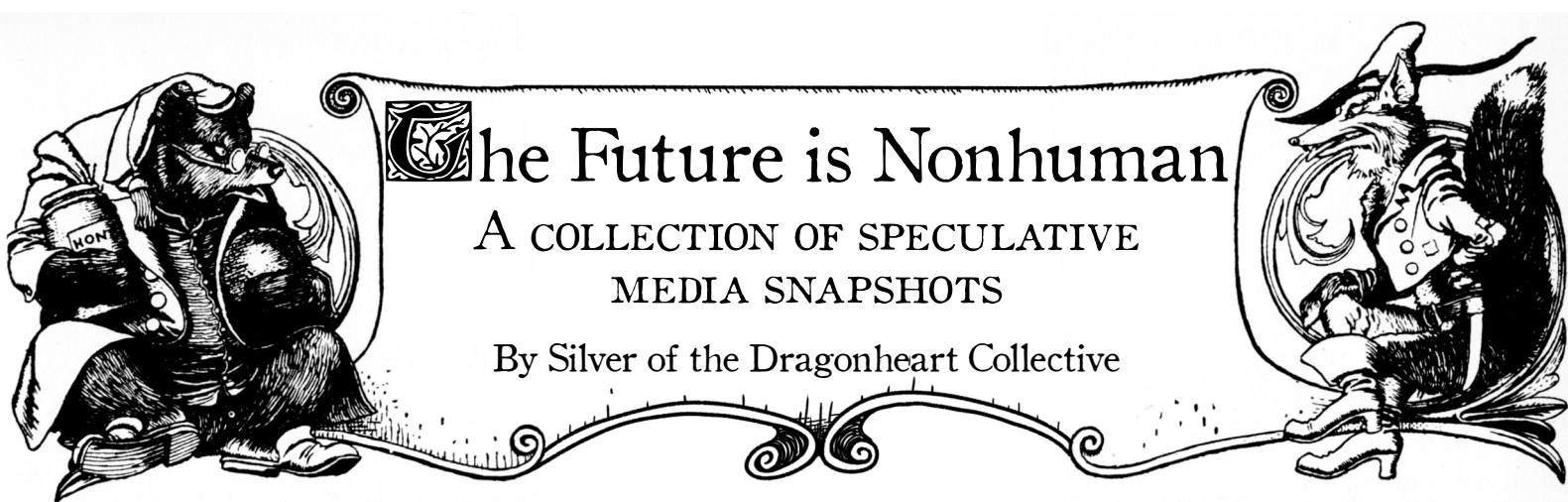


I trade freedom for comfort most days. A warm bed and prepared meals in exchange for a harness warning the fearful and modified clothes for the embarrassed. A job to support my pack, culling deer populations when they begin to grow too numerous during the season. My pack is...broader, now. Encompassing human, wolf, therians, others. Nontraditional, to be sure. A melding of instincts, producing a creature that pack-bonds with ease and frequency out of both necessity and affection. Running with my kin for work and play and survival. Protecting and caring for my humans out of love and loyalty. Taking in my people as I was taken in before. A web of relations, centered on me, who I gather and love and celebrate my new life with.



And always, the reminder sits on our dresser, where I can no longer see it. Out of sight, in the past, yet ever present. They, like my humanity, were part of me, shaped me, but aren't me any longer. I am something new, something beautiful, something that revels in its own strangeness. I am a wolf, and I'll always have the fangs to prove it.





r/transspecieshelp

SRT FAQ

WHAT IS SRT?

SRT, or Species Reassignment Therapy, is a medical treatment to give a more 'nonhuman-looking' body.

It is a GMO virus that edits your genetics with careful splices of animal DNA to cause your body to change. There are several variants.

WHO TAKES SRT?

People who wish to have a body that looks less like a 'standard human' may take SRT. These include those who are transspecies, transhuman, or otherkin, but are not restricted to thereof.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF SRT?

- ☞ Growing fur or wool instead of hair
- ☞ Thicker nails more like claws
- ☞ Growing sensory whiskers
- ☞ Changes in taste
- ☞ In those who menstruate various changes regarding fertility cycles depending on variant
- ☞ Variant specific changes regarding weight distribution, skin thickness and texture, skin looseness, ability to sweat, and body odor

Surgeries or prosthetics are required for the majority of alterations still, and fur and wool will grow in according to hair color, but SRT can be quite species affirming.

SRT is only available for mammalian species right now, but there is currently research into the viability of reptiles and birds.

A list of side effects that may occur while changes are still occurring are [\[HERE\]](#).

If you have a compromised or highly sensitized immune system or are allergic to the preservation compounds SRT may not be for you.

ARE THE EFFECTS OF SRT PERMANENT?

Yes. Once they have taken root, they are permanent, though further changes may be prevented by taking a special antiviral.

HOW IS SRT TAKEN?

It is a one-time injection at a specialist office.

Over the next five to seven years your body will continue to go through changes according to the variant.

HOW DO I GET SRT?

In the USA, You must get a testimony from a licensed therapist, and one from your GP that you understand the effects and that you are recommended for treatment. After a 6 month wait, you then must apply to get the injection and sign a few waivers.

Sucks and wish it was informed consent, but it is what it is!

Other countries have other regulations, see [\[HERE\]](#) for a comprehensive list.



Journeytobog [follow](#)

SRT VCanis1 Week 4

Got the wereshot 4 weeks ago! Forgot to made a day 1 post but now im 4 weeks in!!!

Had some lethargy and soreness the first week, but not too bad. Vaccines usually hit my body hard so I was expecting some at least.

I can see some change in my nails-the base seems to be getting thicker maybe? They itch a bit at the cuticles.

I know most changes dont really start being noticeable till the 3 month mark but idk I got this giddy sort of euphoria.

Like just having it in my system is already erasing years of depression! I can hardly wait to see how good things are gonna get in a year!

My gf bought me a new collar to celebrate and ohhh I just love her so much <3 <3 <3

[#srt blog](#) [#transspecies](#) [#srt timeline](#)

23 notes



Journeytobog [follow](#)

SRT VCanis1 Month 6

Wow sorry havent been keeping up with this lol.
Lots of changes in my life!

Im engaged now to my gf and we moved to a different state!

Anyway, my nails are getting thicker and darker, and im starting to see fur here and there! My B0 is smelling more doggy too.

Ive been wearing my ngear tail around more and I just cant stop it from wagging all the time. People can tell im turning into a dog now, and im happy we moved to a more liberal state cause I probably wouldve lost my job otherwise.

I feel like im starting to turn into me.

#srt blog #transspecies #srt timeline

31 notes



Journeytobdog [follow](#)

SRT VCanis1 Month 7

My fur is coming in better now, and I dont really sweat so well now either, its t-shirt and shorts life now!

Got on a waitlist for consideration for ear lengthening and muscle transplant to move em!

I also have a wedding date now and we have a friend who can officiate and were gonna have BBQ. Super lesbian puppy bbq time in 2 months!!!

I really think this has cured my depression. I havent had a really low day since I started SRT!

#srt blog #transpecies #srt timeline

18 notes



STRIPES (HE / THEY)
@CHUFFINGUPSIDEDOWN

Never forget your nonhuman elders, who lived before the days of SRT and decent surgeries and often lost their jobs for even little nods to their true self!



EWE UNLIMITED (SHE / HER)
@WOOLWLW

transgender community 🍷 transspecies community

We are allies in the fight for bodily autonomy forever and always!



r/transspecieshelp

MUZZLE CONSTRUCTION SURGERY 1 YR AFTER UPDATE (PROGRESS REPORT)

u/lightspectrumpaws

I am now 1 year post-muzzle construction surgery!

I got my jaw and upper skull lengthened by about 1 and a half inches, and got my nose altered as well.

I will be going in for dental work to get my teeth situated in 3 months, and im quite excited!

This is one of the most extreme and grueling modifications available right now that is medically approved, and the healing process was rough(tube feeding for nearly half a year... Still only allowed soft food that doesnt require a lot of chewing), but finally looking down my snout feels right!

Its healed well so far and I can move everything alright.

Relearning how to talk was also a trip, but I like the 'were accent' the muzzle gives me.

My fur hasnt finished growing in properly yet on my muzzle, but its getting there.

There is a lot of fearmongering about this surgery, cuz its pretty new and what it was 5 years ago was less good looking and the pics right after the surgery arent ever gonna be pretty while you are still all swollen and stuff, but you can get really good results. I did.

I really feel like me. Like a feline-man.

COMMENTS

SHARE

u/roaringforlove

Congrats dude!! Its really encouraging to hear. Ive been on the fence about getting morsuplasty for awhile, and this is starting to sway me- do you have pictures or the name of the surgeon you saw?

u/lightspectrumpaws

Ill dm you because I dont wanna doxx myself lol, but sure!



LYRA KITSUNE (SHE/HER)

@WILLOWWILLOWISP

Every time I wonder if I made the right decision in transitioning (both species and gender) I go and do a twirl in front of the mirror and feel my ngear tails and lengthened ears flop and see my skirt frill out in front of me and my heart feels so full and I stop having doubts.



otherkinkingarthur [follow](#)

I know theres such a focus on bodymods in the community, but I just wanna say that you arent any less nonhuman if you choose to not get SRT or species reassignment surgeries. They arent for everyone (and only do well for some species types), and some people it would be medically unadvisable.

Its perfectly ok to just identify as nonhuman- you dont even have to wear body decorations. You are still you.



civetboytailunlimited [follow](#)

THIS!

I have MCAS so I cant get SRT or my immune system will try to kill me lol, and I dont think the current muzzle options are good enough for me yet.

I like wearing nonpermanant gear when I have the spoons, but its totally not required! I know theres so many poor folks and kids with unsupportive parents out there and issues like mine and all of you are no les nonhuman than if you were doing those things!

**#civetchirps.txt #transspecies stuff #health stuff #positivity
#remember there was a time without modern solutions and our
elders were still nonhuman and you are still nonhuman now!**

2,237 notes

THE FUTURE IS NONHUMAN

by Jaden Marchbanks

Today I sit at a Howl. My fellow animal-people mill around me. I remember, twenty, even thirty years ago that howls were not like this. They were so much smaller for one, and so few people had marking tattoos, much less other permanent body mods.

The greymuzzles told stories then, to my scrawny 16 year old self, of what it was like in the 2020s, how they were still smaller and still having less people who had on any level transitioned or came out of the kennel, so to speak.

Now something like twenty percent have obviously started SRT and/or have visible species-affirming bodymods, and something like a solid half have ngear tails of many shapes and sizes- to say nothing of those with collars or ear headbands and the like.

Not everyone wants to transition in body of course, but we are all nonhuman here. I see a dragon with ridged dermal implants on their arms and a young reindeer decked in bells and harness chatting about the trials of large horn implants.

People call me a graymuzzle now, I suppose it tracks- I *am* already graying.

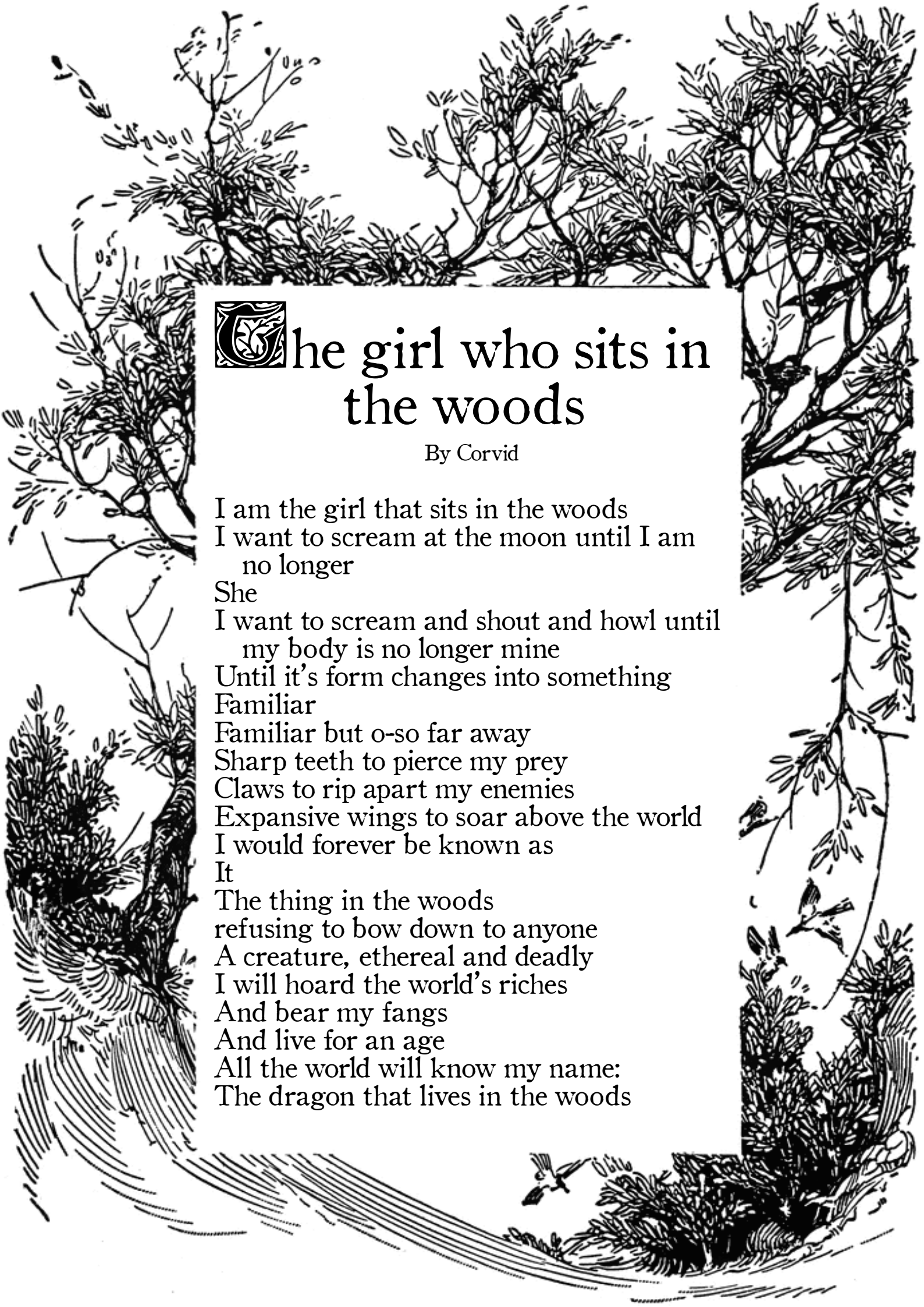
I lived through the legislation protests to see transspecies experiences and bodymodders getting legal protection after SRT was thrust into the limelight and was at half of them.

Its nice to see where we are now.

My kid has three out transspecies kids in her year (freshman) and is friends with one. She came out as a girl about when he came out as a raccoon. There was a time when it was unthinkable to declare either of those publicly in a Florida school- but kids now find it routine.

It makes me feel indescribable emotions to see how far we have come and wonder where we will be when my kid and her friend are my age.

The future is nonhuman, and its our actions and activism now that will make it so. I hope to see you there.



The girl who sits in the woods

By Corvid

I am the girl that sits in the woods
I want to scream at the moon until I am
no longer

She

I want to scream and shout and howl until
my body is no longer mine

Until it's form changes into something
Familiar

Familiar but o-so far away

Sharp teeth to pierce my prey

Claws to rip apart my enemies

Expansive wings to soar above the world

I would forever be known as

It

The thing in the woods

refusing to bow down to anyone

A creature, ethereal and deadly

I will hoard the world's riches

And bear my fangs

And live for an age

All the world will know my name:

The dragon that lives in the woods

Possoms are described as trash animals or vermin

their tenacity to survive is admirable

I don't feel so far away from them

we both have long horrific teeth

a prehensile tail

Tenacity to eat whatever is available

almost soundless

A complete lack of communication compared to other species

Solitary

Hardened

Camouflaged

The ability to survive disease

Thriving in the worst conditions

possums behavior is seldom aggressive or cruel

Often seen as dangerous to the ignorant and meek

The animals that know them rip them to shreds

As if a meroy killing

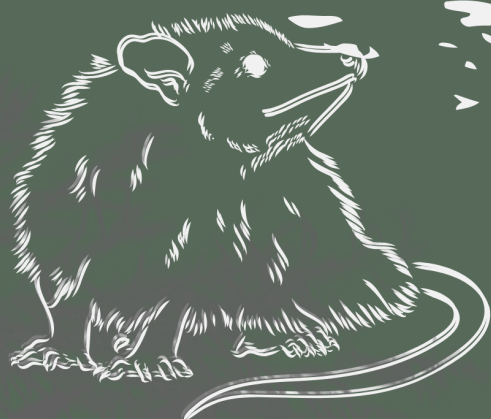
In the wild the average possum lives till 2
years old

in captivity, 4.

And yet, Still surviving

When I am torn apart

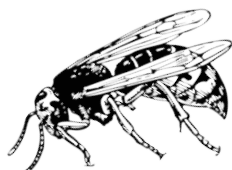
like them, I play dead





Wasp-cat's runaway

By Prince B.



i do still love you, but i am a creature twice-bound: once by lethal conviction and once by selfish, ever-hungry longing for understanding.

wasps are such loyal creatures; they love their nests until it kills them.

i, too, am collared to that love, but as a beast of dual nature, my cat's razor cleverness makes it easy to slip from such bindings if it chokes me.

i should know by now you are a friend of fairer weather - a warm bed and refilled bowl to shelter me from the uncaring wild outside.

your hands have been so kind to my sensitive ears, but even i must take heed to what i listen to.

i see why they call cats inconstant now, and what is my cat's life if not selfish and fickle?

i trust you don't mean to ignore my wailing, but i spent one too many nights outside your bedroom door.

it's unbecoming to take flight this instant; to paw open the flap and disappear forever. it's cold out there, and i have yet to learn to hunt.

..besides, i should not be so cold to you, even in private. you are imperfect, but so am i.

you have been kind to me, and though i know this place will not be home to me forever, i will eat from your hands right to the moment until i never feel their warmth on my whiskers again.

i promise not to let you miss me for long. i will leave fast and quiet; if i am lucky you will not hear my goodbye. until then, we're trying. we'll get by together.

maybe someday i will run wild and flourish with beasts i truly belong with, or i will die on a wet moonlit road somewhere far. no matter how, i no longer fear the future: i know i will make it mine sooner or later.

for now, keep letting me out. my wings need practice, and i must know distance before i commit to this. thank you. may we meet a kind farewell.





POSTFACE

As always, I'm left in wonder at the displays of talent and passion that our community is capable of. It leaves me feeling swept away more than I can rightly say, with feelings that are too large for simple words on a page.

This work would be impossible without the artists and authors who contributed to it. A million thank-yous to the fearless creators who put their best paw (talons, hoofs, feet, fins) forward and put their work on display, both here and elsewhere; you are the foundation of this community in many ways, and I hope that the tracks you leave may be admired and followed for decades to come.

And for those who hesitate on the edges of the firelight, afraid to step into it and show off their own creations: let this work inspire you to take that dive. The world is excited to see what you'll make; I know that I certainly am!

Yours in kin and claw,

Page Shepard